

WM
C814b
1865

THE HEALON

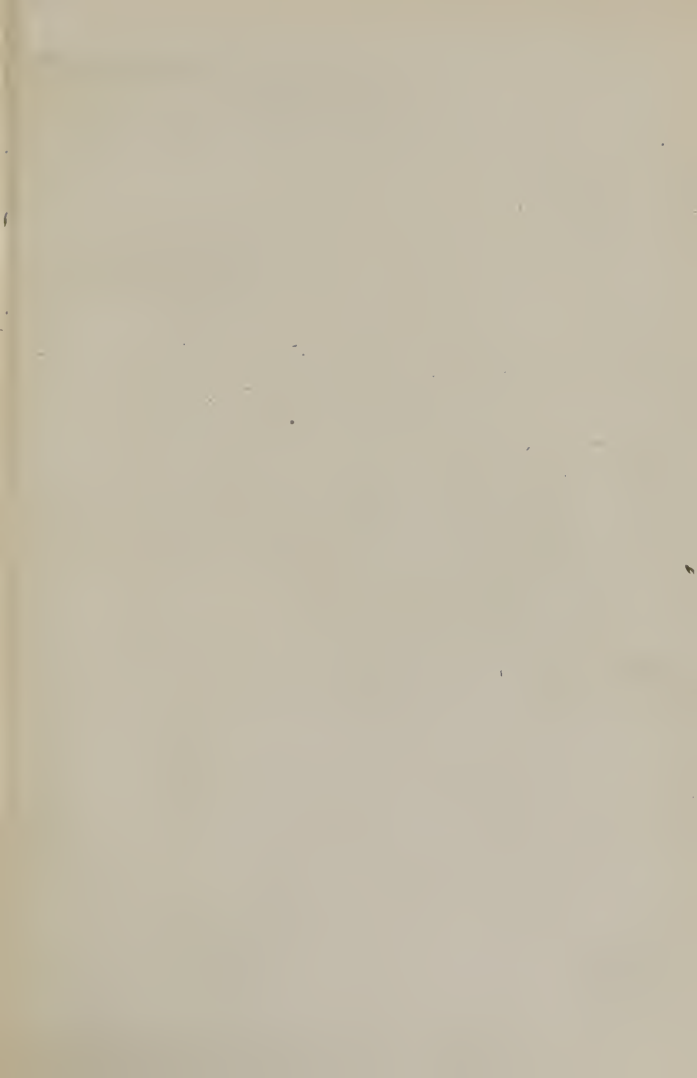
Surgeon General's Office

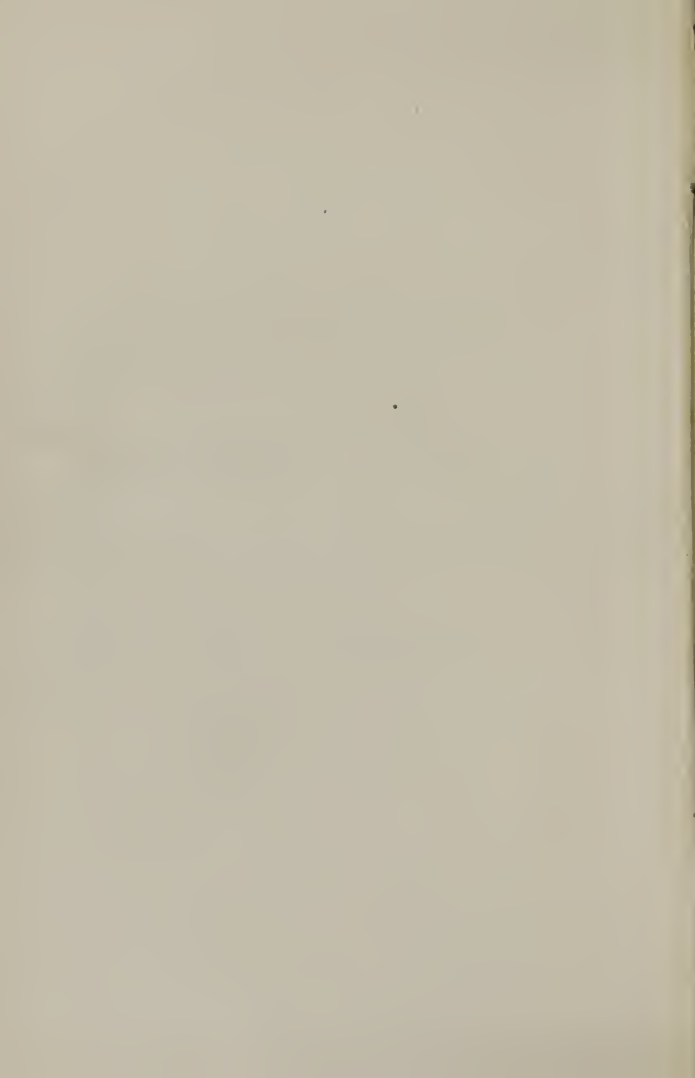
LIBRARY

ANNE

Section,

No. 18665-







THE BEACON:

OR,

A WARNING TO YOUNG AND OLD.

IN WHICH IS SHOWN, IN THE MEDICAL PRACTICE OF THE
AUTHOR, HOW BODY AND MIND ARE DESTROYED
BY EVIL HABITS; RESULTING IN EPILEPSY,
CONSUMPTION, IDIOCY AND INSANITY.

BY WILLIAM M. CORNELL, M.D., LL.D.,

Author of "Observations upon Epilepsy and other Nervous Diseases:"
"Inhalation in Diseases of the Air Passages and Lungs:" "Con-
sumption Prevented:" "Consumption Treated:" "Ship and
Shore Physician and Surgeon:" "How to Enjoy Life;
or, Physical and Mental Hygiene:" "Clerical
Health:" &c, &c.

1865

PHILADELPHIA :
PUBLISHED BY F. HUMPHREY & CO.,
No. 33 South Fifteenth Street.
1865.

WM

C8146

1865

Reel: 72-13-2

ARMED FORCES MEDICAL LIBRARY
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1865, by

WILLIAM M. CORNELL, M. D., LL. D.,

In the Clerk's office in the District Court, in and for the
Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Cases Resulting in Epilepsy.

CHAPTER II.

Cases Resulting in Consumption.

CHAPTER III.

Cases Resulting in Idioey and Insanity.

CHAPTER IV.

Parental Faults, Hereditary Transmission, &c.

CHAPTER V.

Management of Children.

CHAPTER VI.

Causes of Nervous Diseases.

PREFACE.

IN the following pages but a small part of the evils arising from disobedience to a Divine Command is stated. The writer has shown very clearly, and directly, as he thinks, how an abuse of a natural power, designed by God to bless and replenish the earth, results in human wretchedness, misery and death. These results have come under the eye of the Physician. They are no fabulous tales, hunted up for effect; no fictitious stories to create a sensation; but sober facts. The book contains the words of "truth and soberness," on a subject of vast moment to our race; one that has been quite too much neglected; and the reader is admon-

ished beforehand, that all disguise is thrown off; the subject is not handled with "kid gloves," nor viewed through "rose-colored spectacles." It is held up in its naked deformity; and, if any do not want to see it, or choose to go blindfolded into this vortex of destruction, they had better lay down the book and read no further.

The book is not written for the medical profession. It prescribes no *medical* treatment, though, from the specialty of treating nervous and chronic diseases, multitudes of cases of epilepsy, consumption and mental imbecility have come under the care of the Author, and these have been the real cause of the appearance of the book. The writer has no fellowship with that plan which would "make every man his own doctor." On the contrary, he advises every one to go to the best physician within his knowledge.

The Author acknowledges his indebtedness to the Report of Dr. S. G. Howe for assistance and statistics.

A *Beacon* is for the multitude to look at, and to admonish them of danger. Such is this little book; and, such as it is, it is now committed to the public. If it shall save any from being precipitated into a bottomless gulf, it will answer the end designed by

THE AUTHOR.

No. 33 South Fifteenth Street,
Philadelphia, February, 1865.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE,
BY REV. A. R. BAKER, OF BOSTON.

TO WM. M. CORNELL, D. D.

Dear Sir:—

A suggestion made in our late and pleasant interview in this city has so frequently recurred to my mind as to call forth this note, which I submit for your consideration. It related to the amorous or sexual passion of mankind; to the numerous difficulties attending it as a branch of the education of the young,—difficulties equalled only by the serious importance of the subject.

The Creator, doubtless, planted a susceptibility to this passion in the human breast for the wisest and most benevolent purposes. For the same holy ends, his institutions and laws were intended to regulate it,—spirit and grace to sanctify and bless it.

In the early period of my life, I was much occupied in the cause of education in various literary institutions. Here I witnessed the need of instruction and warning, felt the force of the difficulties alluded to, and read many able treatises. Some of these, prepared by members of the medical faculty, seemed to me too analytical and professional; and so minute in description and detail, as to increase the very exposure and temptations which they were designed to diminish or remove; so scientific and so very unlike the method of the inspired writers as to be ill adapted to the popular or even private and individual use. Those written by clergymen were too often so didactic, so filled with the sanctions of divine law, and so remote from the relationships and exposures of life as to present little attraction to the young mind. Therefore, when I discovered in a pupil symptoms of secret vice, or the forecast shadows of approaching reprobation, I commonly preferred a personal interview to the presentation of a book.

But when I entered the clerical profession and began to preach the gospel, I was

frequently called upon to open with prayer the meetings of a Moral Reform Association, consisting principally of the wives and mothers of my congregation,—devout and excellent women,—who desired to know and perform their duty, in the best manner, to their own children and families in this, as in every other department of Christian nurture and activity. I felt the need of divine knowledge and assistance, in order to answer appropriately the questions which they proposed to me as their spiritual teacher and guide.

I was soon called to preach a course of sermons on the Decalogue, and shall never forget the peculiar solicitude with which I approached the seventh commandment. I could not, dared not omit it, being, as it is, an essential part of the moral law which I had been ordained to preach. As one of the ten commandments given by God to Moses on Sinai, not for the Jews alone, but for his people of every age, clime and nation, I was not at liberty to consider it, as some do a few other passages pertaining to the same subject, of “private interpretation,” designed only for solitary reading and instruction.

Yet how could I so present its leading theme as to fulfil my ordination-vows; so as to commend that purity of heart and life which the Bible enjoins, to the understanding and conscience of my hearers, and to render the word preached a savor of life unto life? No lectures, no volume on homiletics had taught me the lessons which I here needed. I read and *re-read* the sermons of Dr. Dwight and other divines of learned eminence in the church on this commandment, the expositions of it by Drs. Paley and Philip, the scholia and homilies of the Fathers, from each of whom I derived valuable hints. But none of them removed my difficulty. The Sabbath when I was expected to preach on that commandment, was at hand; and curiosity was awake to hear what I should say on a theme so delicate, yet so sacred.

At length, I laid aside all other books for the Bible, and gave myself to prayer and the diligent study of God's word, to ascertain both *the matter* and *manner* of instruction. I wrote and preached two sermons on the subject, which were well received, and which, I was assured, accomplished the

great end of pulpit ministrations. The substance of these and their Scriptural authorities I subsequently published in my exposition of this commandment, in two small volumes, entitled "The Catechism Tested by the Bible." Nearly three hundred thousand of these small books have been printed in English; and they have been translated into several foreign languages. From all quarters I have received the most gratifying account of them, especially of their manner of treating this commandment.

I trust you will pardon this personal allusion, when I inform you that, with other testimony, it has served to convince me of the great desirableness of a treatise on this subject which may assist educators, teachers of Sabbath-schools, and especially parents, in the nurture of the young,—a treatise which forestalls, and thereby prevents, all impurity in thought, word or deed, and which encourages virtue by every Scriptural motive. I hope the Lord may raise up, qualify, dispose and enable some one to perform this important service,—a Luke who may sustain the two-fold character of a "beloved physician" and of a zealous

apostle. As you fill with honor these two professions, being both a practitioner of the healing art and also a minister of our holy religion, my thoughts have naturally turned to you; and I have asked myself the question, which I now submit for your devout reflection and decision, *why should you not attempt that important yet difficult work?* May God give you grace to think and act wisely! This is the fervent prayer of

Your sincere friend,

A. R. BAKER.

Boston, January 10, 1865.

THE BEACON.

CHAPTER I.

CASES OF SELF-ABUSE RESULTING IN EPILEPSY.

CASE 1.—A gentleman, a Deacon, called on me in 1850, in Boston, wishing me to prescribe for his son, then eighteen years old, who was suffering from epilepsy. The father wished to know the *cause* of the trouble. I told him the convulsions were caused by *self-abuse*. The son said he had never been addicted to the vile habit, and solemnly protested that such was the fact. The father, a *good* man, (but credulous respecting the statement of his son, as many fathers are,) believed the son, and, conse-

(15)

quently, disbelieved the doctor. He consulted the "family physician," at home, and *he* saw no evidence of what I had said. The father wrote me, expressing his surprise that *I* should think as I did. He stated that his son was no better. I replied that I was confident in my opinion; and that I had stated the true cause of all the difficulty. In a few weeks, father and son were both again ushered into my office. The father said, "he had come to make a confession. His son had acknowledged that he had practised this *solitary vice* from a child, and had continued it even after he had been under my treatment."

I told the Deacon, *I* was no more satisfied of the fact then, than I was before; that I did not make mistakes upon that subject; that, when the habit had proceeded as far as it had in this case, there were certain symptoms which those acquainted with such cases, and who were in the habit of seeing them every day, could not mistake. This young man promised to reform; but I had no idea that he would. He did not; and, when I last heard from him, he was an inmate of an asylum for the insane.

CASE 2.—A gentleman called in 1849, in Boston, aged twenty-four years. He had been subject to epileptic convulsions for eleven years. For three years previous to the fits, he had had *nervous spasms*. Sometimes, he had two or three fits in succession. Said he knew no cause for the convulsions, and still acknowledged that he had been addicted to *self-abuse*. He seemed to have no idea that *that* caused the fits. *I* had no doubt that it did. He was saved.

CASE 3.—December 15th, 1849, a man aged thirty-four years, called for medical advice. He had had epileptic fits for fourteen years. He had been addicted to the *solitary vice* from childhood. He had convulsions once in three weeks; thinks they continued half an hour. His constitution is shattered, and he is a mere wreck of a human being, manifesting the great and extreme misery to which one evil habit will, if indulged, reduce a human being. It would seem as though, if any youth could see such a miserable creature, reduced to such degradation by his own hand, he would never

be guilty of such a vice. He died in an asylum for the insane.

CASE 4.—A gentleman requested me to visit his two daughters. They resided in a distant State. I went, for it has ever been my practice, so far as possible, to *see* my patients before prescribing for them. I found the elder one, aged sixteen years, a beautiful girl. She was subject to fits in the *night* only. Upon asking if she had ever been in the habit of this vice, she frankly confessed that she had practised it from early childhood, having been *taught it by a servant girl*. Nor had she, according to her own statement, the least idea that there was anything wrong or injurious about it. She said that to produce a pleasurable sensation between the parts of generation and the mammæ, or breasts, she had often “picked and pinched” the latter till they bled. The other daughter’s case was similar, though she was two years younger. Their father asked me what I thought was the cause of his daughters’ sickness. I told him frankly, and he thanked me for my fidelity. Some flatterers would not have done this; and, I

think, some physicians would not have told him.

CASE 5.—In 1858, Miss ———, aged fifteen and a half years, came under my care, from a distant State. She was somewhat less than the ordinary height, of fair complexion, light blue eyes, and light hair. Her muscles were flabby, and the condition of the whole system indicated a depraved state of the blood. She said, she knew no cause for the convulsions which she had every night. They were always “night visitors,” and always came when she was asleep. She sometimes had three of these convulsions in one night. She said she had been under the care of a very good physician, but he had done her no good. She was pale, appetite tolerably good. Her spirits were generally good. She had seen some of my former patients, who had recovered, and she evidently came expecting also to recover. The first night after her arrival, in conversation about her health, I asked her if she had ever been accustomed to such a vice. She said, she had not; she knew nothing about it; had never heard of such a thing.

Though I had some doubts of the truth of her statement, yet nothing further was said about it. She did not improve much; evidently, not so fast as she expected to do; and one day, with apparently deep feeling, she said, "Doctor, I am afraid I shall never get well." I replied, "I do not know as you will, and I am afraid you did not tell me the truth, in answer to a question which I asked you the night you came here. She broke out crying, and replied, "Well, I did not tell you the truth; I did not suppose it would make any difference, and I did not feel as though I could tell you. I was taught that practice by a maid, who lived at my father's, and have been addicted to it from a little child; and never, till I saw something about it in one of your books, had I any idea that it was wrong."

Here was a case where the habit had produced its worst effects in a confirmed epilepsy, and yet the girl, belonging to a good family, like the deacon's son above, had been in such a practice from a child; and, what was more, *never knew that it was wrong.*

REMARKS ON THE ABOVE CASES.

If such cases do not develop a parent's duty to teach his child the evil results of such a practice, it is difficult to say what would. I would say to every parent who fears that the ears of his child, son or daughter, may be contaminated by hearing such things, *While you are afraid they will hear of such conduct, they may be in the practice of that which will one day result in epilepsy, idiocy, or insanity; and, if you are wise, or prudent, you will clear your own skirts, by telling them the result of such and such a course.*

I have now given five cases in which epilepsy was induced by self-abuse—three males and two females. I could swell the list to a hundred, but that is not necessary. If the above are not enough to convince parents and youth of the evils of such habits, the hundred, or a thousand cases would not do it.

The horrors of epilepsy, I shall scarcely attempt to describe. A clergyman, of the Baptist denomination, from Charleston, South Carolina, who had it, and who recovered under my treatment, has described

it in the following language: "There can be no disease more terrible than epilepsy! The subject of this fearful malady has no security for a moment. He may go out well, and the next hour be brought home dead, or wounded, or maimed! His mind is continually on the rack, and, if there are any circumstances in which one feels as though he can scarcely keep from laying violent hands upon his own life, the ease of an epileptic is one of them." He goes on to describe his own case, and his gratitude to God for his recovery, in language showing that he felt that he had escaped from the most wretched condition that a man could be in.

Let me here say, that there are many cases of epilepsy which were never induced by self-abuse. The case of this reverend gentleman was one; and, when I have been describing the cases that have arisen from the above-named practice, I wish it to be distinctly understood, that there are hundreds of other cases that have arisen from other causes. There are, also, many cases where the sufferer has violated no known natural law of his Maker. So that we cannot say of any one who is an epileptic, he himself is

the author of his disease. Still, it must be confessed, that gluttony, drunkenness, lasciviousness, wilfulness and mental pressure are by far the more prominent precursors of this disease. We may say, very generally, that he who avoids all these, will not be likely to become an epileptic; and yet he *may* be one, because, as already stated, there are causes of the disease other than those over which we have control. Why, it is sometimes asked, does self-abuse produce such sad results? The answer to such a question may not be very easy to him who has little or no knowledge of the human system. We are almost compelled to say to such an inquirer, as the eminent late Dr. Bell, of the McClain Asylum, once said in court to an impertinent attorney: "It would not be possible, your honor, (addressing the court) for me to explain *that* to an unprofessional man." But to the medical man it is very clear. Every time these organs are thus intensely excited, the whole nervous system is put upon the utmost stretch. The whole generative apparatus is specially under the nervous energy, and hence all these diseases, which spring from such excesses, are *nervous*

diseases. All kinds of convulsions, everything connected with neuralgia, St. Vitus' dance, spasms, contractions and expansions of the muscles, consumption, &c., &c., all are the effects of nervous influence; and hence most of our diseases may properly be said to be nervous. But we shall have more to say on this point, when we come to speak of other diseases than epilepsy, which arise from abuse of the organs of generation.

CHAPTER II.

CASES OF SELF-ABUSE RESULTING IN CONSUMPTION.

Here, again, a wide field opens to our view. These cases meet us on every side. In fact, they are quite as numerous as those of epilepsy and other diseases specially denominated *nervous*. Here, again, I have had some experience, from having written two small books, some years since, one entitled "Consumption Prevented," and the other, "Consumption Treated," which went through several editions.

CASE 1.—A young man came to me who had visited several physicians. He said, he had just been told that his lungs were diseased, and that he could not live many months. Upon examining into his case, I found him very weak, quite emaciated, and with a strong tendency to consumption. I ascertained fully his habits, the whole cause of his debility, and told him there was hope

of recovery in his case, provided he would pursue a proper course. He took the advice, abandoned his bad habits, and one year afterward, I received from him the following, which speaks for itself: "During the winter and spring, I was entirely free from all cough and expectoration, and enjoyed uninterrupted health. I have no hectic, no feverish symptoms, no chill, skin in a healthy condition, and have raised no blood."

CASE 2.—Was called to see a patient, in consumption, in the country; found a delicate young man, far gone with this disease. He was about twenty-two years of age; began his bad habits when a child, and had continued them until he was too weak and too far gone to pursue them any longer. His account of himself was painful to hear, and prospects of recovery he had none. It was heart-chilling to behold this young man, in the midst of what should have been his strength, completely prostrated by his own folly. Medical advice was now of no use to him, and shortly he closed his earthly existence. He died a victim to this "abomination of desolation."

CASE 3.—This was an old school-mate. He belonged to a good family. He was bright and active. He obtained several prizes, and stood at the head of his class. He became pale, languid and emaciated. He lost his energy, always looked down, as though he had been stealing, or as though he suspected some one would detect him in some crime; and here, let it be remarked, that this *looking down* is almost always a concomitant of the practice now under consideration. It seems to be a sense of shame that comes over these poor victims. His failing health was attributed to his sudden growth and hard study. His parents took him home. But here, he emaciated and failed faster than at school. He was spoken to upon the delicate subject of his habits; but he denied that he was addicted to any such thing. By and by, he began to have a hacking cough, and soon all the symptoms of a pulmonary consumption were developed. He acknowledged, before he died, the cause of his failure, and it was none other than this fatal habit. He said it was contracted at school, and that he was free from it when he left home.

CASE 4.—This was a young female. She, also, began the practice at school. The girl died in consumption, and confessed to her mother, when it was too late, that her own practices had brought her to her bitter end.

I might go on and enumerate case after case of this kind, where this pernicious custom terminated in this so very prevalent disease; but, surely, it is not necessary.

REMARKS ON CONSUMPTIVE CASES.

Why, it may be asked, should this habit produce consumption? The answer is at hand. What is consumption? "A disease all over," a failure of the whole system. Every portion of the body becomes contaminated. The vice destroys nutrition, the loss of flesh follows, strength goes, lassitude comes. "O, how tired I am," is the common expression of these poor self-sacrificers. Even before the disease in the lungs is fully developed, the poor victim can scarcely rise from his bed. When risen, he is idle, stupid and indolent. If he attempt to do anything difficult, like going up stairs, or lifting, or running, his heart beats so forcibly that he

has to stop, or lie down. The pain in his back and loins is often so great, that he cannot stand erect; his legs cannot support him; the whole vitality of the body is gone; the vital fluid, the blood, is a mass of corruption; the best portion of it has been drawn away, day by day, till all that is left is a dead mass. The lower extremities are more feeble and emaciated than the upper, for the reason that they are more affected by the draught made upon the lower part of the spinal marrow. Hence Dr. Good and many other physicians speak of cases where "the poor victim is unable to walk." If warned in time to forsake his bad habits, his strength, and flesh, and spirits—in a word, his life, returns. If he continue in the practice, the Almighty, so to speak, cannot save him. He must go down to an untimely grave, as thousands do every year. How much is it to be regretted that parents, teachers, and, above all, *physicians*, who best know the sad results of such habits, should say and do no more to save the rising generation from this whirlpool of destruction!

CHAPTER III.

IDIOCY AND INSANITY FROM SELF-ABUSE.

Under this head, I include all weakness of intellect, such as hypochondria, hysteria, imbecility, dullness, mania and insanity.

CASE 1.—I knew a boy who was taught by an older boy the habit now being considered. This older one died early of consumption, but the younger one lived. He became the complete victim of the evil habit, and from seven to his fifteenth year, he practiced the vice by day and by night, and sometimes several times during the day. From ten years old up to fifteen, he was sad, moody, not disposed to talk, loved to be alone, and had none of the bright and sparkling mind which characterized the brothers. At the age of fifteen, he became hypochondriacal. He wanted to see a physician, and, at the same time, he said he should certainly die; there was no help for him. He knew he had consumption, and die he should. If driven from that opinion, as he sometimes

was, then he had some other disease that would surely prove fatal. Still, he pursued the vile habit till he was eighteen years old. At this time, his mind was wrecked, and he was unfit for any business—a confirmed hypochondriac. He left off the habit, but it had made such inroads upon his mind, that he never recovered; but remained a burden to his friends, and quite a useless fellow in the world. Still, he had the most inveterate hate toward him who had taught himself the vile habit.

CASE 2.—One of my college-mates was addicted while in college to this vice. He lived to graduate, but with a debilitated mind, and died an idiot within three years from his graduation.

CASE 3.—Another, a brother of the former, was addicted to the same habit; became, first, feeble-minded, then imbecile, and, finally, a moping idiot, and was taken to an Asylum for the insane, where he lived as a nuisance for many years, and was living the last I heard from him—an object of perfect disgust.

Both these were sons of a clergyman, were naturally bright and sprightly, and might have lived to bless the world, but for having been "abusers of themselves."

The following cases of idioey are taken from Dr. S. G. Howe's Report to the Massachusetts Legislature in 1848. Dr. Howe is one of our most thoroughly scientific physicians, and has rendered signal service to the public by his careful investigations of such cases. Out of 574 idiots in Massachusetts, Dr. Howe reports 210 addicted to masturbation. Dr. Howe says:

"When we accepted the task assigned to us, it was not without a sense of its importance. We did not look upon idioey as a thing which concerned only the hundred or thousand unfortunate creatures in this generation who are stunted or blighted by it; for even if means could be found of raising all the idiots now within our borders from their brutishness, and alleviating their suffering, the work would have to be done over again, because the next generation would be burdened with an equal number of them. Such means would only cut off the outward cancer, and leave the vicious

sources of it in the system. We regarded idiocy as a diseased excrecence of society; as an outward sign of an inward malady. It was hard to believe it to be in the order of Providence that the earth should always be cumbered with so many creatures in the human shape, but without the light of human reason. It seemed impious to attribute to the Creator any such glaring imperfection in his handiwork. It appeared to us certain that the existence of so many idiots in every generation *must* be the consequence of some violation of the *natural laws*;—that where there was so much suffering, there must have been sin. We resolved, therefore, to seek for the *sources* of the evil, as well as to gauge the depth and extent of the misery. It was to be expected that the search would oblige us to witness painful scenes, not only of misfortunes and sufferings, but of deformities and infirmities, the consequences of ignorance, vice, and depravity. The subjects of them, however, were brethren of the human family; the end proposed was not only to relieve their sufferings, and improve their condition; but, if possible, to lessen such evils in coming gene-

rations; the task, therefore, was not to be shrunk from, however repulsive and painful was its contemplation.

"It is to be confessed, however, that we have been painfully disappointed by the sad reality, for the numbers of beings originally made in God's image, but now sunk in utter brutishness, is fearfully great, even beyond anything that had been anticipated.

"The examination of their physical condition forces one into scenes, from the contemplation of which the mind and the senses instinctively revolt.

"In searching for the causes of this wretchedness in the condition and habits of the progenitors of the sufferers, there is found a degree of physical deterioration, and of mental and moral darkness, which will hardly be credited.

"We would fain be spared any relation of what has been witnessed, as well for our own sake, as for the tastes and feelings of others, which must be shocked by the recital of it. It would be pleasanter simply to recommend such measures as would tend to remove the present evils, and prevent their recurrence. But this may not be. Evils

cannot be grappled with, and overcome, unless their nature and extent are fully known. Besides, our duty was not only to examine into, but to report upon, the *condition* of the idiots in our Commonwealth; and that duty must be done.

“By diligent and careful inquiries in nearly one hundred towns in different parts of the State, we have ascertained the existence, and examined the condition, of *five hundred and seventy-four* human beings who are condemned to hopeless idiocy, who are considered and treated as idiots by their neighbors, and left to their own brutishness. They are also idiotic in a legal sense; that is, they are regarded as incapable of entering into contracts, and are irresponsible for their actions, although some of them would not be considered as idiots according to the definition of idiocy by medical writers. There are a few cases where insanity has terminated in total *dementia*. There are others where the sufferers seemed to have had all their faculties in youth, and to have gradually lost them, not by insanity, but by unknown causes. Excluding such cases, there are four hundred

and twenty persons who are to be regarded as truly idiots.

“These are found in 77 towns. But of these towns, only 63 were thoroughly examined. These contain an aggregate population of 185,942; among which were found 361 idiots, exclusive of insane persons. Now if the other parts of the State contain the same proportion of idiots to their whole population, the total number in the Commonwealth is *between twelve and fifteen hundred!*

“This is a fearful number, and it may seem to others, as it did at first to us, to be incredible. It is far greater than any calculation based upon previous returns to the Legislature by the commissioners appointed to ascertain the number of lunatics and idiots, or than the number of idiots set down in the pauper abstract, published by the Secretary of State, as supported or relieved by the towns. That document makes the number to be only 377; whereas, if our observations are correct, and the other towns in the State furnish a proportionate number of pauper idiots, then the whole number in the State of that class should be over 500. It is probable, however, that the overseers of the

poor, in making their return, gave only the number of idiots in almshouses, and overlooked many who receive aid from the towns at their own houses. When a poor woman applies for aid, they do not go to inquire whether any of her children are idiotic or not; whereas we pursued our inquiries into the families, and found many idiots there. However, without any reference to the manner in which other returns have been made, or any question about the degree of care which was observed, by those who made them, to distinguish between idiots and lunatics, it seems certain that our own return is a very near approach to the truth. Indeed, if there be any material error, it must be of omission; for our calculation is not based upon vague reports or answers returned to circulars. We have examined almost every case personally, or by an agent on whom dependence could be placed, and in a few only have relied upon other sources of information which seemed unquestionable."

CASE 4.—Another case came under my own practice, where the poor boy suffered anything but death, and he thought more

than he should, in a thousand deaths. He often expressed to me what one of this class once wrote to Dr. Tissot, "I do not believe any human being has suffered as much as I have. Without the special care of Providence, I should find it difficult to support the burden of life." Many such have committed suicide. *Esquirol*, a distinguished physician, who studied much into mental diseases, and who practised much among the insane, says, he "has often known this vile habit lead to melancholy and suicide." *Orfila* says, "the physical and moral disgust, mental apathy without any hope of cure, which often follows premature indulgence of this kind, frequently cause suicide." M. Sainte Marie says, "he knew a gentleman who, to avoid conscription, shut himself up in an isolated house. There, to lighten his ennui, he gave himself up to self-abuse. After three years of this seclusion, he appeared in the world. He was exceedingly pale and thin. This was attributed to the extreme loneliness in which he had lived. Finding himself impotent, as the effect of his vile habit, he became disgusted with himself; and this feeling soon settled into one of deep and

fixed despair. He now took a large dose of arsenic, but it was so much that he vomited it. The man finally recovered, but it was only by laying aside this vile habit.

I have often found cases of decided debility of the mental powers in this class of patients. Failure of the *memory* is a very common result. Some have this defect continue all their lives, and seem to be thus punished for "the sins of their youth." It frequently extends to perfect forgetfulness and utter stupidity. I have had a patient lose his memory entirely from this cause. Such persons seldom love to move.

In another case of a young man, the health of the body was, not only destroyed, but, also, the mind was rendered idiotic. He, also, died in a "Retreat" for such persons.

These cases are exceedingly common. The number rendered insane, imbecile and idiotic by this practice is astonishingly large. Where a young person begins to grow taciturn, is unwilling to converse, turns away from your direct gaze, is indisposed to move, takes but little interest in anything, and the

mind seems to be growing dull, I always suspect this evil habit lies at the bottom, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred I have never been mistaken.

REMARKS ON THE ABOVE CASES.

Who can witness these cases and not sigh over fallen human nature? Who can see youth, the fairest part of God's creation on earth, falling prostrate before such a self-destroyer and not cry out, "Oh! thou Adam, what hast thou done? Oh! thou son, or daughter, of Adam, what art thou doing?" The mind, the immortal mind,—the mind, capable of exploring and improving and brightening to infinite ages, is in ruins in this very infancy of its being, and all this by its own efforts, by its own guilt!

And, then, to think of the law of God that is thus broken! I mean now the *natural* law, or what philosophers call the law of nature. This law makes it sin to transgress. Every act of self-abuse is a violation, and is as certain to meet with retribution in this world as that there are natural laws of our being, or that there is a God.

It is the immutable decree of the Almighty that fire shall burn, and the person who puts his hand into it will be burned. So it is just as immutable in the divine economy of this world that "abusers of themselves" shall suffer. They may murmur, and repine against Providence; they may say God gave them passions to be indulged, and they will indulge them; they may set in sullen despair when the consequences of transgression begin to overtake them; but it will all be to no purpose. No natural law of God will be changed for their convenience or accommodation. The whips and scourges, the idiotic and insane minds, epilepsies, spasms, consumptions, loss of vision, hearing, feeling, paralysis, asthma, cartarrh, and the thousands of other weaknesses and deformities of body and mind that follow a violated law of our being, will continue to follow it—by day and by night, in youth and in age. As long as men sin, so long they shall suffer, and they may be sure *their* sin will find them out.

Chronic diseases have been my study for many, many long years, and the reader will be surprised to learn how large a proportion of these diseases have been self induced.

“Health consists with temperance alone.”

Let me not be misunderstood. I do not mean that chronic diseases, diseases of particular organs, as of the brain, (and consequently the mind,) of the lungs, liver, stomach, urinary and genital organs, diseases of the skin, eyes, &c., are never the result of unknown causes, or causes from without the individual; but I do say, (and say it from long experience, and after having been called to treat, probably, as many of this class of patients as any other physician,) I do say, that by far the larger part of all chronic diseases are self-induced, and that, generally, a physician who has had twenty or thirty years' experience with such cases, ought, and *is* able to detect their *origin*.

Let me make the following general remark here:—The great failure of physicians in not curing diseases, (where they do fail,) arises from not knowing *what* the disease is, and *what* was precisely its origin; and, if the writer has succeeded in curing some of these diseases, which have baffled the skill of others, it is chiefly to be ascribed to the fact that he has endeavored first to ascertain

these two points before prescribing a remedy. Many a time has he said to the patient, *when* I find what is the matter with you, and what was the origin of it, I will then prescribe a remedy; and I have always acted upon the principle, better do nothing than do injury; and when I know not what to do, I will not do I know not what. No physician should allow a patient to leave him before he has ascertained, (if the thing be possible,) the cause of the disease; and if it be any one of the species of the abuse of which we have spoken, he is inexcusable, if he does not tell him *whence* his disease came, and solemnly admonish him to "go and sin no more."

Some tender-minded physicians may say their duty is to cure the body, and not to interfere with moral questions, nor to offend delicate feelings and ears. But, I ask, is a physician likely to cure the body, when the disease arises from an evil habit, unless that habit is broken up? And will such a habit be likely to be broken up, if he, the prescriber, the physician, make no allusion to such a habit? Who can believe this? And yet how many physicians see these patients, prescribe for them, and neither inquire after

their habits, nor drop a word of advice respecting them.

In the first place, it is believed such physicians cannot cure the bodies; and in the next place, they are very culpable in not referring to violations of the great moral law of the Most High. They will not be likely to cure the body, because they do not know what to do; and they will not benefit the poor patient morally, because they do not attempt to do any such thing.

We know it is often said, the duty of the physician is to heal the body. This is true; but the good physician, like his Master, will endeavor to benefit both the body and soul of his patients.

Violations of the moral law of God, nor of the law of our being, never go unpunished. Look at those two hundred and ten cases of self-abuse, out of five hundred and seventy-six idiots in Massachusetts, in the report, already referred to, of Dr. Howe. Almost one-half the idiots in the whole State, made so by their own hands, by self-abuse; and yet we are told by squeamish persons, *careful* persons, delicate, nervous persons, persons who are afraid their children will know

something about these matters, that we must not speak of them. Oh, no! it will corrupt them. It will lead them to *impurity*! It will teach them "to put *white beans* in their noses." Fie! on such squeamishness! Think of the confession of my good deacon. Oh! how he lectured me. Oh! how pure *his* boy was! Let all such think that *their* children are not all born from "*white hens' eggs*."

No man can be a physician and see what the writer has seen in a twenty years' practice among such cases, and hold his tongue, or keep his pen still with impunity. Many of you, young and old, parents and children, who read this little book, may think and say that the subject is magnified beyond due bounds; it is exaggerated; the evil is not so great as it is represented to be. I tell you, it is so great, and I speak what I do know. I have had patient after patient, day after day, from every part of the Union, afflicted with epilepsy and other nervous diseases. The whole class of chronic debilities connected with the genital system is *nervous self-abuse, masturbation, spermatorrhœa*; all that induces that utter prostration of both body and mind, is from nervous excitement; and,

in the treatment and cure of nervous diseases, the physician has to do with these. He is bound, therefore, by every consideration of duty to his fellow-men, to warn them of their danger, and the true-hearted physician, like the celebrated John Mason Good, of blessed memory, will do it; yes, he *will* do it, whether it make friends or foes.

I speak the truth, when I tell you I have many letters from those who have been saved, giving me most hearty thanks for warning them of their danger. Thirty-two patients were received into the Worcester Hospital for the Insane, in Massachusetts, in one year, who were rendered insane by this cause alone. Is not such a fact enough to make you *think*?

In harmony with what is here said, I find the following pertinent remarks in a sermon of Henry Ward Beecher :

“I should like to look at some of the great decrees of God respecting the race and human society, for they throw some light upon the doctrine of leadership.

“1. The doctrine of rewards and punishments is fundamental to the constitution of man. It is definite and infixed. There is a

right and there is a wrong, and there is a nature of things by which the right must be rewarded and the wrong must be punished. The tendencies of modern discoveries, and of physiological instruction, and ethical instruction, based upon physiological knowledge, all point in that direction. And we seek, each day, to impress upon our children the unalterable truth that wrong will punish itself first or last, and that right will be rewarded first or last.

“2. If there is one thing that has been demonstrated beyond all skepticism, it is that a man cannot be happy who lives selfishly. After a tuition of five thousand years, the world is coming not only to acknowledge that there is the foundation of a moral government, but to recognize some of the operative principles of that government, among the first of which is this: that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Benevolence carries a double blessing; it blesses him that gives and him that receives. And it is becoming a part of the conviction of communities that, if a man is to be happy, there is a law of happiness which he must observe. It is not that which men take in

that makes them happy, but that they which throw out. The thing that makes you happy is not centripetal, but centrifugal. You are unhappy in the ratio in which you are selfish, and happy in the ratio in which you are benevolent. There are laws, and that is one of them. And when you strike it, you are like a man that strikes the channel of a river, and goes down stream easily; but when you go against it, you are like a man that runs against a rock in the stream.

“3. There is a decree, also, by which purity, and temperance, and health are made necessary to development and perpetuity. It has been suspected or known by individuals, by priests and ministers of the truth, by virtuous families and circles, but it is now becoming a part of the world's ascertained knowledge—namely, that there is a constitution of things by which that purity and self-restraint which the gospel inculcates are indispensable to manhood. If you are going to be a man, these constitute the only road by which you can pass to it. It is not possible for manhood, under the most auspicious circumstances, to develop

except according to the laws of morality. A man may steal, and dodge the sheriff; a man may forge, and dodge the constable; and man may rebel, and dodge the government—especially if the governor wants him to; but you cannot violate a divine decree, and dodge God. You cannot trample under foot any one of the fundamental laws of the constitution of this world, and not find that you are yourself sheriff, constable, judge, and executioner. If the law and all its officials are in you, and a part of you, and you violate the conditions of manhood, you do not have to wait for a judgment. That is added; and there is a perpetual judgment-day for transgression in this world.”

CHAPTER IV.

PARENTAL FAULTS, HEREDITARY TRANSMISSIONS, ETC.

We have already spoken of God's laws, natural as well as moral, for the government of his compound creature, man. He has certain laws pertaining to the health and well-being of our race. If these laws are obeyed, all our faculties, powers, and organs should come into existence in the most perfect and successful operation. Thus the infant should come into being with all the powers in miniature necessary for a healthy body and a vigorous mind. I do not say that it is so; on the contrary, it is far otherwise. We are born to trouble as naturally as for the sparks to fly upward. But what if it should appear that, even *this* trouble, to a very great extent, is the natural result of human disobedience? There are more ways than one in which God visits the iniquities of the fathers (and of the mothers, too,) upon the children; and what if it shall appear, in the sequel, that parents have a far

greater responsibility, as respects the health, and peculiar obliquities and idiosyncrasies of their offspring, than they are wont to suppose?

“I am fearfully and wonderfully made,” said the sweet Psalmist and pious king of Israel. He might well have said this, had he confined the remark to the human *body*, where every bone, muscle, nerve, sinew, even the minutest vessel, has its appropriate use—is adapted to answer its own end, and to accomplish its proper purpose, just as much as the eye to see and the ear to hear. The more this exquisite workmanship, the human body, has been examined, the more traces of the wisdom, power and goodness of the Great Architect have been discovered.

Who can wonder that a distinguished atheist should have been convinced of the being, power, wisdom and goodness of God, by the dissection and careful examination of the body? Look at its elementary parts! its structure, functions! Examine its organs! what variety! how unlike! how singular! how diverse its functions! See the bones and blood; the dark muscles and transparent

humors; the glossy, brilliant, adorning, vegetating hair; the sensitive nerve; the curious digestive apparatus; the "breathing lungs and beating heart." In health, like the motion of the heavenly bodies, how silent and easy, and pleasantly are all their duties fulfilled; in disease, how they grate and excruciate!

I said above, the child should come into being with all the powers in miniature for a "sound mind in a sound body." I now add, where this is not the case, the fault is in his progenitors. This is a grave charge, and yet *it is true*. If this fact were realized, it would astound the community. I make the assertion boldly; I am as certain of it as I am of any fact in morals or ethics. In every case where children are born deformed, born deaf, blind, idiotic, or so feebly organized that they cannot come to maturity under ordinary means of culture—or, where they have congenital seeds of premature decay—in every such case, the fault was in their progenitors! It alters not this fact to say that they sinned *ignorantly*; ignorantly or wilfully, the effect is the same

upon the offspring. Poison *is* poison, and will produce its deleterious effects with equal certainty, whether it be taken in ignorance of its properties or with intent to kill. The laws of God are so clear upon this subject, (as has been previously stated,) that "he who runs may read" them, if he *will*. I repeat, the penalty will be inflicted; but I am met by the assertion from relatives and friends of these poor, unfortunate children, "we know better; we know that the parents of these children were not in fault. They were our friends, and they were healthy, wise, prudent, temperate," &c. Now all this *may* have been true, though it requires no small amount of faith to believe it. But admit it, and then it by no means disproves my assertion. The *immediate* parents might have been comparatively faultless, for it is well known that the transmission of any infirmity is not always direct, nor always in the same form. By no means. Allow me here to quote the following remarks of Dr. Howe :

"Transmission may be modified by the influence of one sound parent; it may skip a generation; it may affect one child more,

and another less; it may affect one in one form, and another in another; and so, in a thousand ways, it may elude observation. But, more especially does it escape observation, because it may affect a child merely by *diminishing*, not destroying, the vigor of his mind or body; by almost paralyzing one mental faculty, or giving fearful activity to one animal passion, and so re-appearing, in the child, in a different dress from what it wore in the parent. Variety is the great law of nature, and it holds good in the transmission of diseased tendencies, as well as in everything else. But unerring certainty, too, is alike a characteristic of this law; and let no one flatter himself, or herself, that its penalties can be escaped.

“Can there be so sad a sight on earth as that of a parent looking upon a son deformed, or halt, or blind, or deaf, with the consciousness that he himself is the author of the infirmity; or upon a sick or suffering daughter, fading and dying in early youth, from the gnawing of a worm which he himself placed within her breast; or, a wayward or unmanageable child, urged and hurried on to lust, and licentiousness, and

crime, by the inevitable force of passions which he himself bestowed upon it? If such parent erred in ignorance; if he had always obeyed the laws of life and morality, as far as he knew them, still must his suffering be grievous. But if he sinned against the clear light of God's law; if he secretly defiled the temple of his soul, ran riot in lust, fed the fire of passion until it burnt out the very core of his body, and then planted a spark from the smouldering ashes to shoot up into unhallowed flames in the bosom of his child—how horrible must be his sensations when he looks upon that child, consuming, morally, every day before his eyes! Talk about the dread of a material hell in the far-off future! The fear of that can be nothing to the fear of plunging one's own child in the hell of passion *here*. It is probable that there are thousands of such parents among us, who never dream that they are at all responsible for those bodily ailments of their offspring which sadden their own lives; or for the stupidity, the waywardness, or the vice which almost hardens their hearts against the children who manifest them, while, in

reality, those ailments and vices are but the dregs of a poisoned chalice returned to their own lips."

Out of four hundred and twenty cases of congenital idioey, the Massachusetts Commission found in three hundred and fifty-six of them that one or the other, or both, of the immediate progenitors of the unfortunate sufferers had, in some way, widely departed from the normal condition of health, and violated the laws of nature.

What a history is here unfolded! These progenitors, one or both of them, were unhealthy or serofulous, or their hereditary tendencies were to disease of the brain, or insanity; were intemperate, or had impaired their constitutions in youth by self-abuse or sensual excesses. In many—most of these cases, in which the children were born thus, "bearing the iniquity of the parents," the disease was enhanced by deplorable uncleanness, intemperance, improper food, gluttony, want of exercise, and the numerous other curses which always eluster around the homes (if homes they may be called) of such parents. It is not possible to give a full and clear description of the *amount* of these evils,

and I drop them with adding the following, which caps the climax.

Parents have been found, who encourage in their children—how horrid! and scarcely to be credited, unless there were ocular demonstration of the fact—that vicious habit which is the general theme of this book. So far from rebuking them for, or restraining them from, this most disgusting and soul-destroying habit of body and mind, they show complacency in it, and encourage them to pursue it. On this point, Dr. Howe says: “Some even make no concealment of this habit; they point it out to the sickened stranger, and, going to the Bible for justification, they say, complacently, that their child resembles Solomon in early virility. Such is the dreadful effect of ignorance, that even religion is warped to the support of that which it utterly forbids and condemns.”

“In some families which are degraded by drunkenness and vice, there is a degree of combined ignorance and depravity which disgraces humanity. It is not wonderful that feeble-minded children are born in such families; or, being born, that many of them become idiotic. Out of this class, domestics

are sometimes taken by those in better circumstances, and they make their employers *feel* the consequences of suffering ignorance and vice to exist in the community. There are cases recorded in the appendix, where servant-women, who had the charge of little girls, deliberately taught them habits of self-abuse, in order that they might exhaust themselves and go to sleep quietly. This has happened in private houses, as well as in almshouses; and such little girls have become idiotic."

The writer has seen many cases of this kind. In one family, one of the best and most Christian families in the land, two daughters were ruined, and both became epileptic through the instruction of such an abominable domestic. In many, many cases, where I have been called to prescribe for young girls, in most excellent families, upon inquiry, whether they had been addicted to such practice, and where an affirmative answer has been given, it has generally been accompanied with the declaration—"such a girl taught me to do it;" and such a girl was found to have been a domestic in the family.

I know the mind of every virtuous man

and woman recoils from the recital of such atrocious deeds, and their fearful consequences. But it is no use to hide your eyes from them. Nothing will cure the evil but looking it fully in the face, and setting yourselves firmly against it.

You, parent, would be spared reading, or hearing, or thinking of this disgusting subject. I might have been spared the ungrateful task of writing about it. I would have been thus spared, had I not again and again, a hundred times over, in a long practice, seen and heard such remarks as these from the victims of the vice, "Why, I never thought of its being wrong. I would not have done it for the world, if I had ever thought it was wrong."

Again, I say, you must look this matter in the face. You can never exterminate a den of wild beasts, or venomous serpents, by letting them alone. *Putnam* never would have killed the wolf by letting her alone. It was only by entering her den and dragging her forth to the light of day, that he could kill her. So, parent, if you would rid your family of this pest, you must look after it; and you must not look with spectacles,

glossed so, all over with love to your children, that you cannot see their faults. This will never do the work. Jefferson Davis, with his rebel crew, pleads to be let alone. But that is not the way the United States take to cure them of rebellion.

Here is body and soul polluted by a vice, in your very household, taught to your innocent children by one whom you are paying to take care of them ; and will you shut your eyes, and cry, there is no danger ? There *is* danger. I can show from my books and letters, out of over five hundred cases of epilepsy, and other nervous diseases, that I have treated, that three hundred of them were cases which resulted from this vice. What a horrid thought ! Look at these loathsome wrecks of human nature ! Are these miserable wretches, what were, or should have been, men and women, made in the image of God ? God has, undoubtedly, some end to answer by them, and what one can be conceived to be so natural and so much betokening the goodness of the Creator, as that they are set up as way-marks, as BEACONS to others, that they may avoid the fatal rock upon which they have split. I

imagine, when I see such *pillars of salt*, of the violated laws of God, that their language is, *Stand off, for pollution and death are here!*

No man can describe, no language is adequate to portray, the horribleness and degradation of the condition into which this vice reduces human beings. When I look back upon some of my old college companions, who were ruined—lost to their friends and to the race by this vice; yea, more, reduced below the brutes; reduced to idiots of the lowest kind; no reason, no moral sense, no shame; lost to everything but indulgence in that one sin which has destroyed them, I cannot but shudder and weep for my kind!

Reader, if you had seen such cases as I have, you would not wonder that, I write as I do. I have now under my care at this present time, a young man so reduced by this habit, that he has no command of himself. His whole nervous system is so shattered, that he has lost the power of speech, or, rather, stammers so that he cannot be understood.

What renders these cases so melancholy is, there is nothing left in them to which an

appeal can be made. One might as well appeal to the brute creation, for *they* fear the lash, while *these* do not. They are sunk beyond all fear, and in the language of Dr. Good, "are a mass of corruption, and the mind is as debauched as the body."

These desperate persons have a long train following them who are not yet sunk so low, but, who are on the same road, and destined ere long to land in the same abyss. This is, perhaps, the most melancholy feature in this whole catalogue of evils.

If I could make parents believe the extent of this vice, something would be accomplished towards its removal. But, till the vice is admitted, but little will be done to remove it. "The whole need not a physician." Parents may believe me or not. The vice exists. It is here in our city; in every city, in every town throughout this vast nation. It is a "pestilence that walketh in darkness." It destroys all that is noble, and grand, and God-like in human nature.

Children will not confess this vice to parents, until they proclaim it openly and shamelessly to the world. Boys will go to their fathers, and girls to their mothers, with

other things, and lovingly and confidently communicate them, while they will conceal *this*, by every art of low cunning that they can devise. I know this to be the case, for, in all the examples that have come before me in my long practice, I have never known one, where it had been communicated to father or mother, until they had confidently communicated it to me, as their physician, under an urgent request that they would do it, the better to enable me to prescribe for them. So that my Massachusetts Deacon had some reason to believe his son to be innocent, though he ought not to have been so offended with his physician for stating his opinion.

It has sometimes been exceedingly difficult to draw a confession of guilt, in this matter, from the culprit, and, in some cases, I have been unable to do it, till I have told him plainly that, unless he told me the truth, I should not be able to cure him. Thus it was with the girl already named, who, after telling me what was not true, and not recovering so fast as she expected to, confessed her guilt.

The practised eye of a physician, of ordi-

nary discernment, will detect this vice almost instantly. It is known to him by certain unmistakable marks. He cannot communicate these signs to others, save only to say to the fond parent, when you see your child growing pale, emaciated, fitful, turning away from the open inspection of your eye, you have reason to suspect he is in the road to this direful end, and the sooner you ascertain the better.

Parents have much more concern in this business of transmission of disease and tendency to disease, than they suppose. God originally created "every creature after his kind. He created man in his own image." After his fall, "Adam begat a son in *his* own likeness, after his image." In the New Testament we are, also, informed that, "God giveth to every seed his own body." There are various kinds of flesh, but "there is" only "one kind of flesh of men;" and the flesh is nourished, or made of the blood, and God has made of "one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the whole earth."

There is a renewal and perpetuation of the parents in their children. The children are of the parents, "bone of their bone, and flesh

of their flesh." "One blood" circulates in all their veins. The peculiar temperaments, faculties, or idiosyncrasies of parents, are transmitted to their children. This is in accordance with the general laws by which the Creator acts in our world. Every creature has its distinguishing peculiarity. This is true of the vegetable world. Out of the same soil, growing side by side, we find the peach and the pear, the sweet and the sour apple, the rose and the thistle; and so it is with all the productions of the vegetable kingdom. Physiology teaches us that this wonderful fact is attributable to the power of *selection*, in the primary granules and cells, which take from the earth those substances which go, each to produce its like, and to form the peculiar character or *nature* of each plant and its fruit.

"Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles." If we imagine that "chance may give wheat, or some other grain," we are very much mistaken. Chance has nothing to do in the case. It is *God*, operating by fixed laws, "ordained of old, or ever the heavens and the earth were formed;" and following out his own plan, in what we call

nature, meaning his *natural* government, which is as invariable as his own character is unchangeable. In it we see the GREAT FIRST CAUSE, whether we call Him "Jchovah, Jove, or Lord."

This same law may be said emphatically to obtain in our race. It is distinct from all other animals. The principle of transmission, or production, in its original form, is, if possible, more regular and clearly seen in the animal than in the vegetable world. The child of the negro will be black, thick-lipped, bandy-legged, and curly-headed; that of the American aboriginal, red or copper-colored, and straight-haired; or, our own, white, and partaking of all the other well known bodily peculiarities of the Caucasian race.

Now, what is true of races, is also true of families and individuals. The son resembles the father in form, face, expression, manner, in body and mind, in peculiarity of disease and health. In like manner, the daughter is the resemblance of the mother. It is not meant by this, that the sons and the daughters do not each partake of the nature of both the parents, for they certainly do. Such

is the *general* rule. There are exceptions here, as there are to all general laws, but "exceptio probat regulum," the exception only proves the rule true.

The child resembles the parent *in form*. I know many who walk the streets, whose parents I have known, and who are almost *fac similes* of these parents. When, in early life, I was engaged as a pedagogue, upon entering a new school, where I was acquainted with the parents, and unacquainted with the children, I could select those who belonged to particular families. Nor do I pretend to have any more skill than others in the science of genealogy, facieology, physiognomy, or formology. Lord Mansfield, one of the most eminent judges who ever graced the English King's Bench, said, upon deciding the legitimaey of children: "I have always considered *likeness* as one of the most conclusive evidences."

This question is one of interest, not only to the genealogist, or physiologist, but also to the whole community. The principle of *hereditary transmission* reaches deeper than mere facial likeness or bodily form. It embraces the intellectual, moral, and even the

religious inheritance, or their tendencies. What we are, or do, dies not with us. It is impressed upon our age, and extends to posterity, just in proportion to our sphere of influence. In this respect, "no man liveth to himself, or dieth to himself."

The young bear the image of the old, more than in mere association, habits, or corporeal form. A peculiar mode of thought may so impress itself upon the brain, that it will affect its conformation. We see this in the idiot. The form of his head distinguishes him from other men. Though it be deformed, very small, or unusually large, it is still the *idiot's* head. Now, the brain gives form to the head, and this form is capable of being transmitted. The younger Edwards was but the type of the intellect of the elder; John Quincy Adams but old John Adams reproduced. If you say, there are cases on the other side of this question, and the towering minds of these families become deteriorated, I admit the fact, but deny the inference, that such militate against the general law of the hereditary transmission of mind. Other things may have come in to modify these cases; and, though nature pur-

sues *general* laws, yet she sometimes produces monsters.

The same is true of *moral* tendency. The child of dishonest, licentious, or intemperate parents, will be more likely to become addicted to these vices, than one born of honest, virtuous, and sober lineage, aside from the evil example; and hence, though we often find children of such descent, to "run well for a time," and often to give promise of honesty, temperance, and virtue, yet, they often fall into the vices of their parents before they die. Malbrun Briggs, a notorious thief, of Freetown, Mass., was sentenced to the State Prison. He had seven sons, all of whom entered that same institution.

Religious tendencies are, also, hereditarily transmissible. We look for this in pious families; and though it may have been an old proverb, that "ministers' sons and deacons' daughters are worse than those of other men;" it is not true; and very often, if they have been wild and reckless when young, they, nevertheless, usually become eminently good in their maturer years. Some statistics, taken by a gentleman who has had special opportunities for arriving at

the facts on these matters, in the State of Massachusetts, fully bear me out in this statement.

But, I go even further than this; for, disease, or a hereditary tendency to a *physically* or *mentally* diseased state, is often transmitted. In this respect, the "iniquities of the fathers are visited upon the children" for many generations. Such is the case with gout, syphilis, St. Anthony's fire, leprosy, rickets, scrofula, consumption, and many other diseases. So, also, is it with idiosyncrasy of mind. Take a specimen in *insanity*. Every one knows that this is often hereditary. The writer has known a family where the grandfather, father, and four out of seven children were insane. Three of them committed suicide. Esquirol, a distinguished physician, who wrote on insanity, says he "met with a family where seven sisters and brothers were insane." He further says, that "one-half of the cases of insanity which occur among the wealthy, from the intermarriages of relations, to keep the property together, are from a *hereditary taint*. Hallsam mentions ten families, in every one of which several cases of mental derangement occurred. No one doubts the hereditary

descent of insanity, and other traits of diseased minds.

Let not the reader stand and say, Well, if this be so,—if we are so bad, how can we help it? If God brings us into being in this miserable condition, who is to blame for it? And how can we remedy it? This is but an old argument used by Israel, when the prophets told them how badly off they were; “Well,” said they, “if our sins and our iniquities be upon us, and we pine away in them and die, how should we then live?” The science of physiology will answer this question.

Enough has been said on this subject to show the vast responsibility resting upon parents. Still, much more might be said. But, if what has been stated does not reform many, of their pernicious practices, more would not be likely to do it. Here, then, we leave the matter for the present, hoping that a word to every wise parent will be sufficient. We shall have more to say upon hereditary transmission, and the management and education of infants and children of larger growth, at a future time, should Providence grant the opportunity.

CHAPTER V.

MANAGEMENT OF CHILDREN, ETC.

We are anxious to make further statements as to the laws of health, as they are connected with the training and habits of the young. There can be no doubt but that a proper course of education would prevent, not only one-half the disease that now exists, but, also, more than one-half of the *evil habits* which destroy both mind and body.

In 1849, the Hon. Horace Mann, then Secretary of the "Massachusetts Board of Education," a gentleman who did good service for education and the proper management of the young, in his zeal for the health of children of the Commonwealth, proposed the following question to Drs. James Jackson and Marshall S. Perry, of Boston, and S. B. Woodward, of Worcester, and Edward Jarvis, of Dorchester—"From a retrospect of your extensive medical practice, and from your observations on health and longevity, how great a *proportion* of disease, of suffering,

of a diminution of the physical capacity of usefulness and of the abridgment of life, comes from sheer ignorance, and which, therefore, we might hope to see averted, if people had that degree of knowledge which is easily attainable?"

To this question, thus officially propounded, by one who was then exerting more influence upon the rising generation, as it respected education and health, (or rather, education alone, for I consider that the means of preserving health, are a constituent part of education,) than any other man in our community, these eminent physicians returned for answer: "More than one-half." One of them said, "three-fourths." These men were not fools. No one who ever knew them, will believe they were fanatics. They spoke "the words of truth and soberness."

But, if this is true of the community, generally, it is more emphatically so of *infants*. In the weekly bills of mortality, in the four great Atlantic cities, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, more than one-third of the deaths, are of infants or of children under five years of age. For the week ending Saturday, July 23, 1858, and there has been, annually, a proportional increase

for the last seven years, out of a total of sixty-eight deaths in the city of Boston, seventeen were under one year old. In New Orleans, and in many others of the Southern cities, the mortality of infants is proportionally larger than in those upon the Atlantic. This should be a startling truth, and it ought to arouse the whole community, and summon them to action, respecting such fearful slaughter.

Why is it? If "more than one-half of *all* the deaths are from sheer ignorance, and might be averted," what *proportion* of this *one-third* are traceable to the ignorance, culpable ignorance and neglect of parents and guardians? Will not the blood of these "poor innocents" be found in their skirts?

What then are some of the ways and means in, and by which this fearful mortal ity is accomplished.

1. First, then, by violating God's natural laws in intermarriages and in other ways, what was said by Isaiah, of the Jews, there morally applied, is now literally true: "The children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth," consequently they die. This is the fate of many. Thus, "the

iniquity of the fathers is visited upon the children not yet born."

2. Many infants fall victims to the ignorance and injudicious interference and management at birth, (in officiously attempting to aid, but really thwarting nature,) of both male and female accouchers. But, as this may be considered a delicate subject to bring before the public, we only add, non-professional men have no adequate conception of the vast number that die from the cause here named.

3. Many infants die from the poisonous effect of the mother's milk. In all ordinary cases, the mother is the most proper nurse for the child, and she is an unnatural mother, and unworthy of the name, who refuses to perform this duty.

But there are cases where the mother is totally unqualified for such a trust; such are some of these,—where she is of a scrofulous or consumptive habit, or where she has some other disease or physical incapacity. I knew a lady whose first two children died of convulsions, before they were three months old. She was advised not to nurse the third child. But the advice was unheeded. That, also,

died like the others. She was blessed with the fourth child, and so much was said, both by the father and the physician, that she never nursed it. This child is still alive and healthy, and she has since borne two others, neither of which has she nursed, and both are now healthy children. The writer is confident it is not too much to say, that many children, who would otherwise have lived and been healthy, have been poisoned by the mother's milk. A woman may also be disqualified for nursing her child by epilepsy, or by a tendency to insanity, or from malformation of the organs of nutrition for the child. These have been known to be totally unfitted for the use designed by Providence, by artificial pressure or tight lacing. Some are too nervous or excitable, ever to be the nurses of their own children. An infant has been known to be thrown into convulsions, by immediately taking milk from a woman who has just indulged in a fit of anger, or violent passion.

4. A fourth cause of the death of some infants, is over-feeding them. They nurse *too often*, and *too much*. Two children had died in one family before the age of two

years. The third child was taken sick. An irregular medical practitioner was the family physician. When a regular physician was called to see this third child, the wife of the man who had been the physician, was holding the sick child in her arms; and, upon the entering of the physician, she said: "They have lost all their former children, and we wish, if you can do anything for this one, that you would, for we are afraid it will die, and we don't want it to die on our hands." The child was examined, and it was found that what disease it had, had first been induced by over-feeding, and then augmented by over and unsuitable drugging. But little medicine was given, and the mother was told "not to nurse the child oftener than once in four hours." The advice was followed, the child recovered, and is still living and healthy, and still another has been added to the family, and brought up in the same way, and is strong and healthy, having scarcely ever been sick. No child should ever be nursed oftener than once in four hours. Let this rule be adopted, and perseveringly adhered to, and the sickness of infants will be diminished at least one-half.

Regularity in the time of the child's taking its nutriment, should be established from the first. Upon *order*, in this particular, the health of the child, and the peace and comfort of the parents, are greatly dependent. Canker, and a low, debilitated state of the young mother's health, often demand, for her own safety, that she should cease to nurse her child. Many a young and feeble mother has gone down to an early grave, from a reluctance to relinquish this charge sufficiently early.

As it respects poisonous milk, with which children are often fed, Philadelphia and Boston, are not so bad as New York, but they approximate sufficiently near to their larger sister, in this respect.

It should also be stated that a far larger proportion of deaths among children, takes place among the foreign, than among the native population; and, the wonder is, that among our foreigners, not that so many of their children die, but, when all the attending circumstances, such as neglect, filth, exposure, scanty and unwholesome food, &c., are taken into the account, that *any* live.

In dressing infants, two things should al-

ways be remembered—never to use pins, and ever to avoid tight compresses. These often cause great inconvenience, and, sometimes, loss of life.

The infant's face should never be so covered, as in the least to impede its respiration. Many children have been suffocated, in consequence of disobeying this precept.

An infant's eyes should never be exposed to the rays of the sun, or the full glare of a bright light. Infantile ophthalmia, neuralgia, and serious diseases of the head, are often the consequence of neglecting this advice.

The recently-born infant should be sacredly protected, and scrupulously guarded against the officious interference of all grandmothers, old nurses, and doting dames, who would compel it to swallow sweetened rum, whisky, gin, molasses and water, or castor oil, paregoric, and the whole paraphernalia of such like materials as it is liable to be drenched with, by those who give place to "old wives' fables" upon this matter. They are all, in whole, and in every part, not only unnecessary, but positively injurious; and every "wise woman," who would build up

her house, and have her "children like olive plants round about the table,"

"—Should purge her family around,
And make such wicked flee."

I have already discarded medicine for the newly-born infant. As to food, it may now be added, as sleep is what the infant requires, it should not be disturbed with food for several hours. This is contrary to the practice of many mothers, of which it is true of food, as was said of medicine, they will be drenching the child. If the mother is able to supply milk, at the end of ten or twelve hours, the infant may take it, and it should swallow nothing earlier. Should this nutriment—the only one designed by the Creator,—not be supplied till three or four days after the birth of the infant,—a case which sometimes happens,—it will be restless, and appear to be hungry. It may then take a little thin gruel, mixed with a small portion of milk. A small quantity of warm water may even then be preferable. Nothing ought to be given, as soon as the mother can nurse the child.

During the first five or six months, the

infant should be nursed in the night, as well as by day, but never oftener than once in four hours. Then, it should be trained to sleep in the night, and be nursed at proper intervals by day.

When being *weaned*, it should nurse at greater intervals by day, and be allowed no artificial food by night.

When nursed, the infant should be put alternately to each breast, as by putting it to one only, an unnatural state of body will supervene to the mother, showing itself by a lateral disproportion of one breast, one side, and very likely, by squinting with one eye.

As we have supposed the mother to be, ordinarily, the nurse of her child, every proper effort should be made to keep her in good health, as upon this depends the health and well being of the infant. A plain and wholesome diet, without sweetmeats, ardent spirits, and strong tea or coffee, with quietness, will best promote this end, which can never be accomplished by over-feeding.

It is of the greatest importance to look after these things in *hired* nurses. As they often come from a scanty table, to one more richly supplied, they are prone to indulge

the appetite to the injury of themselves, and the children whom they nurse. Nurses should not be sustained by any one kind of food alone, but use a *mixed* diet, always avoiding, however, alcoholic liquors and high seasoned viands. It may be advantageous, if the nurse be spare, both to herself and the child, for her to use a small portion of malt liquor every day.

If, after five or six months from birth, the infant is found to be growing thin and peevish, another nurse should be procured, or the time of weaning anticipated.

Considerable skill and tact are requisite to select a good nurse, where one must be hired: indeed, as much more than a jockey would use in choosing a horse, as a child is more valuable than a horse. The first requisition is, that she be of a good disposition and of temperate and virtuous habits. The next is, that she be possessed of good health. The signs of health are a skin free from pimples or eruptions; a clean tongue, indicating healthy digestion; gums and teeth sound and perfect, and a plentiful supply of good milk.

The German physicians are very curious

upon such points, and one of them has given the following rules for selecting a good nurse, in most of which the writer concurs: "Youthfulness, health, plenty of milk, and a good build of breasts and nipples, a rather phlegmatic temperament, a quiet disposition, and no inclination to sensuality or dissolute habits; a white, delicate skin, traversed by blue veins, and covered with freckles; fair, or reddish hair, large blue eyes, sound teeth; a fresh breath, a clean skin, no disagreeable odor; a bluish white, rather thin, than tenacious milk, which, dropped upon the thumb nail, flows off rather quickly. It should have no smell, and a mildly sweetish taste. These, with a clean person, and a harmless temper, form the ideal of a good nurse."

Having said this much of the proper nutriment for the infant, nothing need be stated about artificial food, were we not sometimes compelled to resort to it. When this is the case, a general rule is, to give that only which will do the least injury. It should be as much like the natural food as possible. Good cow's milk is usually the most convenient; and, as it is thicker and whiter, and not so sweet as human milk, it may have

added to two parts of it, one of very thin barley water, and sufficient white sugar to make the necessary sweetness. It is advisable to use milk from the same cow. Asses' milk more resembles the human, than that of the cow. But as it is rarely to be had in this country, and as this book will probably never reach the Eastern world, we may omit speaking particularly of this kind of milk.

As the infant advances, soft bread-pap may be given it. This, at first, may consist of soft bread, steeped in hot water, with the addition of a little sugar, and milk fresh from the cow.

The *spoon* is the best vehicle for conveying the food to the mouth of the child. In managing spoon-feeding, all our ingenuity is often put to the test, in so varying the kinds of food as the health and comfort of the child may demand. One kind may work well for a time; then it will become acid, gripe, constipate, or be thrown up. But much of these evils depends upon the proper quantity and time of taking the nourishment.

Nature points out the time of *weaning* the child. Ordinarily, it should be between the

seventh and the twelfth month. Being provided with teeth, the child now begins to relish food; and, as the supply of the mother's milk, at this period, usually becomes less, it can be the more easily weaned. It is generally better that it be done gradually. This is commonly called the *second period*, and the child's food should be different, in many points, from what it had previously been. It is difficult to lay down any precise rule as to this, as something must depend upon the previous habits of the child. It may take the food already named, with the additions which follow, but the regular time of giving it must be maintained. No variation should be allowed from day to day. Four hours' interval between the taking of food in the day time, is sufficient, and it is better not to feed the child in the night.

A healthy child, of two or three years old, usually awakes hungry, at five or six o'clock in the morning, when a little bread and sweet milk may be given it. At nine o'clock, it may have its second meal of bread, softened in hot water, from which the water should be drained off, and fresh milk and a little sugar added to it. Between one and

two, the child may have dinner, consisting of beef, mutton, or chicken broth and bread. Between six and seven it may have its last meal of bread steeped in water, as in the morning; and a healthy child (which has been in the air, as every such child should be during the day,) will be ready for bed shortly after the last meal, and should be allowed nothing more until morning. The supply of food upon awakening in the morning may be gradually discontinued, and breakfast allowed at an earlier hour.

The mother, or nurse, should have understanding enough to perceive that some children require more food than others, and that the same quantity of food will not always be agreeable to the same child; and hence, that no certain rule can well be laid down on this matter. No preconceived system should be laid down, and inflexibly adhered to, as is sometimes the case. Frequently, one class of persons urge, that the growth of the child requires an active nutrition, and maintain that too much food cannot be given. Such cram the stomach and overload the organs of digestion, and thus prevent food from being converted into

healthy nutriment. Another class, looking upon the healthy Irish child, fed on potatoes and coarse bread, and the Hindoo child, which lives and thrives on rice, infer that a scanty vegetable diet is alone to be chosen. Consequently, an error is run into on the other hand, and the child does not get suitable food, nor a sufficiency of that which it has. These opposite extremes are the Scylla and Charybdis which all prudent parents and nurses should shun. The middle course is the way.

The proper management of children, as it respects *cleanliness*, is of great importance. Lavosier found that the amount of excretory matter from the skin of an adult, was one pound and fourteen ounces per day. This discharge is necessary to health. The vast importance of attending to this matter, then, may be readily seen.

The necessity of removing from the child any obstruction to the free escape of this material, must be manifest to all. No adhesion of extraneous matter should be allowed, as it will, in the first place, obstruct the passages designed for the escape of this pernicious excretion, and, in the second place, it

will cause distressing excoriations, and permanent cutaneous disease. It is, therefore, evident that too much attention cannot be paid to the cleanliness of children.

The following incident may not be out of place here:—The writer remembers hearing a physician once remark, that “this constant washing and scrubbing of children was quite unnecessary, and did more hurt than good.” This remark greatly amused a young lady, who, the preceding evening, took one of the same doctor’s children in her arms, but speedily put it from her, remarking to a friend: “It was strange that people could not have their children smell sweeter.” From the day of its birth, till it is able to attend to itself, the child should be thoroughly washed every day. At first, the ablution should be performed with warm water and a soft sponge. Care should be taken that it be not exposed long enough to take cold. As the child grows stronger, or the weather warmer, the temperature of the water may be lessened, until, at length, it may be used nearly, or quite, cold. If cold water is used, it should remain in the nursery over night. It is not necessary to use soap, ex-

cept with those parts of the body which are more apt than others to collect impurities, as the hands, or arms; and, even on these, it will be better to use it but sparingly. Brown soap is better than white, as it is not so apt to cause the skin to crack, which proves very annoying to the child. In all cases, great care should be taken to dry the surface well with a soft napkin, especially where there are folds of the skin, as between the nates, on the front of the neck, in the arm-pits, &c. Neglect of this precaution will be sure to cause excoriations, or bad sores. In fat children, it will also be advisable to dust the parts with fine flour, or starch sifted through a muslin bag. These will absorb the secretions from the surface and prevent friction.

Great care is necessary in attending to the natural evacuations of the child, and that care, if exercised judiciously, will be well repaid, in early establishing habits which will greatly promote its cleanliness, and prevent much inconvenience on the part of the mother or nurse. If we hear the complaint that the child is "dirty," we may pretty generally charge the fault to the nurse.

The hair must be carefully combed and

brushed ; and the eyes, ears, and all other openings from the interior of the body, must be thoroughly cleansed, as well as the skin.

It may not be inappropriate, in this connection, to say a word respecting a good nurse for the sick, as formerly it has been shown how to select a good wet-nurse for the infant.

Next to the physician, a good nurse for the sick, and, above all, for the sick child, is of vast importance. It is about as necessary that the nurse should be trained to the business, as that a physician should be properly educated. Many of the women who attempt to fill this station, are totally incompetent for such duties. They are unclean, ignorant, unmannerly, ill-tempered, peevish, self-excited ; in a word, the paragon of all that is theoretically or practically unlovely and unloveable. Such nuisances should ever be kept at a distance from every child, and especially from every sick one. A nurse should ever have the law of kindness on her lips, cheerfulness in her countenance, affection beaming from her eye, and decision in all her actions. There are many such good nurses. No young woman should con-

sider her education completed, or herself qualified to become "an helpmate for any man," without such a knowledge of physiology and the laws of health, and of domestic economy, as will qualify her for a good nurse. This knowledge should ever form a part of female domestic education; and, it may be added, to the shame of such education, that many of our young ladies in fashionable life, who are desirous to enter the married state, are not competent to make a cup of good tea, or a bowl of gruel, or even milk porridge for the sick. They have been taught to dabble in French, and to repeat *lic, hæc, hoc*, and to play and sing some frivolous song, or, perhaps, dance to admiration; but the important knowledge of nursing a sick husband or child, has never been acquired.

I have been led to introduce some other duties of nurses, than those pertaining to the cleanliness of children, because they are so generally remiss in all their duties.

Perhaps there is hardly another case where "the iniquity of the fathers" (I should say of the *mothers*), is so severely "visited upon the children," among men, as where they are kept uncleanly. While people generally

love to see, and take great delight in the cleanly and sweet child—while such a child is the joy and admiration of all who behold him—the first impulse of our nature is to shun or despise the dirty-faced, uncleanly urchin; and the second is to condemn his indolent mother or nurse.

The Indians, or the so-called Aborigines of our country, it is said, were accustomed to plunge their recently-born infants into cold water, and to continue this as a daily practice. This was cleanly and healthy training for those who were able to bear it, as those only who were hardy, and would make a robust race, survived, and the others were killed. So it is with us; the strong and healthy child is made stronger and more healthy by the cold bath, even from its birth, while the feeble child sinks under the chilling operation.

It is not so with the *tepid* bath. It is perfectly safe, and, instead of being debilitating, is often refreshing. Bruce, travelling in Abyssinia, says, "A luke-warm bath afforded him more refreshment and vigor than a cold one."

The signal benefits of a proper and judi-

cious use of water are, the child thus treated is hardy; his limbs are strong and straight; all his organs grow in due proportion; the circulation of all the fluids is natural and equable; the texture of the flesh solid; the nerves well-strung; the skin smooth and soft over the whole body; the cheeks ruddy; the eyes sparkling; and every limb, and motion, and look, testify that water was not made in vain.

We take the following from Dr. Howe's Report on cleanliness:

"The deplorable ignorance or negligence manifested in the treatment of idiots in our almshouses, is shown most strikingly in the neglect of personal cleanliness. Nothing is more important for their bodily and mental health, than the free and frequent use of cold bathing. There is hardly a case in which it does not work like a charm, in strengthening the nervous system, and increasing the command over all the voluntary muscles. And yet the idiots, in a great many of our almshouses, are disgustingly filthy. They change their body and bed-linen only once a week, and never bathe except when caught in a rain-storm. The consequence is, that

their bodies are covered with scurf; and the scrofulous humors, with which they are almost all afflicted, are aggravated to deadly intensity, by the re-absorption from their clothing, of the excretions which the system throws off. The sensible and insensible perspiration are really *excrementitious matters*, and should be so regarded; they are the *debris*, the *waste* of the body, and should be removed. In all persons, they are totally unfit for any of the purposes of the animal economy, and should not remain in contact with the surface. In some persons, they are disgusting and deadly poisons. A man in high and robust health, who changes his linen daily, may neglect bathing with comparative impunity, because the skin keeps itself clean for a long time; it vigorously repels the foreign matters upon its surface; but it is not so with those who are feeble, or whose functions are any way deranged. Day by day, and year by year, the health is impaired by the pernicious effects of covering up the body with thick clothing, which, while it prevents the invigorating action of the air upon the skin, presses into contact with the mouths of its absorbent vessels the

excrementitious matters, and forces more or less of re-absorption to take place. This may not be the true physiological explanation of the evil effects of neglecting the skin, which, however, are manifest and undeniable, and most of which are removed by daily bathing the whole body with cold water.

“It is important to dwell upon this subject, because there is the most astonishing and deplorable ignorance about it in our community. Some keepers of almshouses seem to think that a man need be washed only twice in this world: once by the nurse before she puts on his swaddling-clothes, and once again before she puts on his grave-clothes. They are confirmed, perhaps, in this, by the flippant wiscacres, who, wrapped complacently in a year’s coating of scurf, say that a man must be a dirty fellow who needs bathing every day. If the almshouse is far removed from any pond or river, in which the inmates bathe for pleasure during the hot weather, the only ablutions required of them are performed by dipping the hands daily in cold water, and rubbing them over the face; and on Sunday, perhaps, by *working down with a little soap*, to the white skin about the

neck and ears. They go upon the doctrine, that those parts only which are exposed need be clean; in which they are practically sustained by thousands of refined people, who, if they should break an ankle in a brilliant ball-room, and require to have their stocking drawn off before the company, would be more pained by the exposure of the state of the foot and toes, than by the accident itself; or, at least, they ought to be.

“If those who protest against the necessity of daily bathing, would only reflect upon the nature of the covering in which they case the body, they would see that the skin should no more be kept in contact with matters which it has once thrown off as excrementitious, than should the lungs be presented again and again with the air which has once been thrown out by them. No man would like to inhale the breath which has just been exhaled by another, *if he knew it*; he would not like to wear linen bathed in another man’s perspiration, and yet the breath and the perspiration of another man are not a whit worse than his own.

“In a few instances, men of strong natural sense and of humanity, reflecting that idiots

of the lowest grade do not differ materially in intelligence from the higher animals, have ceased to blame or punish them, for waywardness or misbehavior, any more than they would punish animals for the like causes; and they have substituted kindness of treatment and constant employment for the old modes of punishment and confinement. But, though there is little or no *intentional* cruelty or unkindness practised towards idiots in our almshouses, there is, in many cases, a most deplorable ignorance of their true condition and wants, which leads to dreadful consequences.

“Many a child who was only simple, and whom kind and wise parents would have trained up to intelligent manhood, on becoming an orphan, has been thrown into the almshouse, and then neglected and mismanaged, until the feeble light of reason has gone out, and left him in the darkness and hopelessness of idiocy. A great many half-witted persons, when first sent to the almshouses, have vicious and debasing habits, which might be cured, but which are generally neglected and allowed to grow rampant, until all moral sense and all decency are gone,

and the poor victims become drivelling idiots. In some almshouses, from want of sufficient force of character on the part of the keepers, or from want of sufficient help to enforce the discipline, the unfortunate idiots are the butts and the tools of the rest of the inmates. In some such cases, they are not only grossly mismanaged, but terribly abused. Sometimes, for want of proper buildings, the separation of the sexes cannot be strictly maintained, and, of course, the whole moral atmosphere of the house is tainted. What hope can there be, in such cases, for the poor youth who is partially idiotic?—what prospect is there for him, but that of gradually sinking down to the level with the brutes? Is such the manner in which the public should discharge the sacred responsibility which devolves upon it, when it assumes the place and the duties of parent and guardian to the orphan and the destitute?"

CHAPTER VI.

CAUSES OF NERVOUS DISEASES.

As a BEACON to all persons of a nervous temperament, I here add a chapter upon the exciting causes of nervous spasms, and nervous diseases of every kind, taking as a specimen, EPILEPSY, commonly called, the FALLING SICKNESS. Nervous diseases are so prevalent in our day, that it sometimes seems as though every one was affected in some way with diseased, or unstrung nerves. Then, the fatal cases of paralysis, apoplexy, epilepsy, and the tormenting affections of neuralgia and rheumatism, which are really diseased nerves, are so numerous as to excite the fears of all, that it will be their turn next. Then, the suddenness of these attacks, when they prove fatal, is enough to alarm the whole community! A person is alive and well to-day, and dead to-morrow. You inquire for the cause, or, the disease, which so suddenly proved fatal. Oh! it was paralysis, or it was rheumatism of the heart, &c.

I have often been asked the question by elderly persons: "Doctor, how does it happen, that we hear so much about these nervous diseases, paralysis and heart-disease, in these days? It used not to be so." Some unprofessional people have even gone so far as to say: "There must be a cause for these cases coming so often. Cannot the doctors tell us what it is?"

Such inquiries need an answer. They can be answered, and the "Beacon" shall be raised, so that those who wish, may see, and shun, if they will, the rock upon which so many have split. There can be no doubt, that our mode of living has much to do with this whole class of diseases. In those cases where we do not go to excess in eating, drinking, mental stimulation, pleasure, and strong passion, we live ever upon the jump. The whole routine of business, from day to day, is one constant whirl and drive. The merchant is on the go, here and there, upon the wing; the professional man dips into this and that speculation, aside from his legitimate duties; and so it is all through the community. Our ancestors, upon the other side of the water, were more sober, calm, se-

date; not so much upon the jump; and, consequently, had less of these nervous affections.

Some time since, I wrote, at the request of a medical friend, something in the form of "Correspondence" upon the "*cause of Epilepsy*," which was published in the "*Philadelphia Medical and Surgical Reporter*;" and, as other nervous diseases are, in a good degree, excited by similar causes, these letters, omitting some of the technical terms, which were used when our readers were doctors, will form the residue of this chapter.

Epilepsy *may* be, and sometimes *is*, caused by direct injury of the brain or spinal cord; but I do not believe one in a hundred cases *is* thus caused. The original cause of the disease (if it may be called a disease) is in the blood; or a defect of nervous energy, which is the natural result of deteriorated blood. What this peculiar state of the blood is, it is not so easy to determine; indeed, this is the case, to a greater or less extent, with every abnormal condition of this vital fluid. We speak of a *scrofulous* or *tubercular diathesis*. But what do we mean by it? Perhaps the best definition we can give of it is, a *lax-*

ity of fibre, or debility of *the whole system*. The whole vigor of the system is undermined—the whole of the blood is deteriorated from its healthy standard. Now, why may we not as properly speak of a *nervous* diathesis as of a *scrofulous* diathesis? It is admitted that our language is not very specific or intelligible in either case. But I do not see why one is not as clear as the other.

The idea, that the original cause of epilepsy is in the blood, is not new. Dr. Carpenter, in his *Physiology*, says: "There appears much reason to believe, that, although the epileptic paroxysm may be immediately excited by some peripheral irritation, etc., it is really dependent upon disordered nutrition of the nervous centres, depending, it may be, upon the presence of abnormal matters in the blood."

Supposing this to be the case, (and I have already said this is my opinion,) a person may be almost an epileptic for years, and yet never have an epileptic paroxysm. Doubtless, this is the case with many. They are debilitated. In a word, they are *nervous*. But they are careful livers; temperate in eating and drinking, and in the indulgence

of all their appetites and passions. They do not jade or overtask the intellect, nor allow themselves to become excited upon any subject. In a word, to use a mariner's phrase, "they sail on an even keel."

But the *exciting* causes of epilepsy are numerous. The persons above described, are like men standing on the verge of a precipice. Being calm and quiet, they might stand there as long as they lived, while a *slight push* would send them over.

I would enumerate the chief *immediate* or *exciting* causes of epilepsy, then, to be *gluttony, drunkenness, self-abuse, excessive venery, precocity of, and excessively tasking the intellect, and willfulness*. These I call the *inducing* causes of the attack; and it is readily seen that the most of them are *self-inducing*.

There are some other *exciting* causes of these attacks, such as worms, wounds, fright, etc., over which men cannot have such control as they ought to have over the first named.

The first *exciting* cause to attend to, then, is *gluttony*.

I will describe one patient, which may serve as a specimen for many.

Unfortunately, to begin with, he was an only grandson of two large families, and father, mother, aunts, uncles, and grand-parents, all vied with each other in seeing who could make the best pie, the richest cake, the finest confectionery, and the most tasty dinner for *little Jesse*. Thus he lived to eat; and, from a child, his appetite was pampered; and, from morning to night, *eating* was his business. He knew no higher enjoyment, sought no greater pleasure, and wanted no better heaven, than mother's pastry, grandmother's larder, and the cook and the confectioner could give him. He became an epileptic at the age of fourteen. The wonder is, that he did not become one at seven, or die before that period, as thousands have. At the age of seventeen he became my patient in the city. His grandfather, who, with his father, uncle, and attending physician, accompanied him to my office, said, "How shall we manage to keep him from buying and eating confectionery, and other trash, when he goes out?" I replied, he will not do that, if I advise him not to do it. To this he assented.

His diet was restricted to meat but once a

day, and a moderate quantity of farinaeous food, and medicine was prescribed. He went six days longer than usual without an attack; then had one in the evening, and two more during the night. Usually, before, he had had two, but not three attacks near together. He vomited, and *that* told the tale. Up came the *dates* and *confectionery* in rich abundance.

Upon reasoning with him on such improper conduct, he seemed very sorry; heartily repented, said he "thought his head could not have been right, or he should not have done it." Promised never to do such a thing again; and, to render a repetition of it impossible, his money was given to an uncle, who was to buy such things as he really needed, but to give him no money to expend himself. Twenty-five cents of the money put into his uncle's hands, had been *given* to the boy by his grandfather for such items as he might need. For three or four days he went without money. Then he began to importune his uncle for his twenty-five cents. In this importunity he was persevering and willful. It was *his* money. He wanted, and would *have* it. I forbade his

uncle to give it to him. This enraged him. He was as a madman. He never would go to see his uncle again, and then he would go and demand it. He was artful. He wanted some to put into the contribution-box. He had not been used to be without a cent in his pocket, etc.

At length the uncle would be annoyed no more by him, and gave me the money.

I purposed to have him get rid of it, and arranged a ride for him with a friend, which should use it up. He rode two miles, which took five cents of it. But no persuasion could induce him to ride back. No; he would walk. With the remainder of the money he bought *nuts* and *confectionery*, and again induced his attacks. This came to my knowledge. The night after, he said, "Well, doctor, do you think I shall recover?" No, I replied; I do not think you ever will. "But you told me you thought there was a chance for me." Yes, I did; but you must remember, I based that opinion upon the condition that you would *obey* me. I do not expect to benefit any one who will not follow my advice.

In short, he was a maniac on eating the

vilest trash, and his case was that of more than a hundred who have come under my treatment. Such patients cannot recover till such a demon is exorcised. But there are very few who do not take too much food. The remarks of the celebrated Dr. Boerhaave, is too true:—"An hundred die by *repletion*—eating too much—where one dies from *inanition*—not eating enough."

Some have epilepsy, and are afflicted with other nervous diseases, who have not induced them by over-feeding. But I have rarely seen an epileptic who would not eat twice as much as was good for him.

The second *exciting* cause of epilepsy, and other nervous diseases, in the order before named, is *drunkenness*.

This may not be so general as gluttony. I do not think it is. Nevertheless, the cases are neither "few, nor far between" in which epileptic and epileptiform attacks are directly induced by excessive drinking. If we look into our almshouses, pauper establishments, lunatic asylums, idiotic schools, etc., we shall find no small portion of their wretched inmates have been brought thither by the use of intoxicating liquor. In the private prac-

tice of most physicians, there will, also, be found many of this class. Even since my last letter was written, a man rung my bell, and was ushered into the office quite the worse for liquor. He stammered out: "S-q-u-i-r-e J. told me you could cure fits." "Well, sir, what caused them?" "Hi d-o n-t k-n o-w. I've had 'em many y-e-a-r-s." Here he began to tell what a likely wife and family he had, etc. "Well, sir, I wish you were as likely as you say they are." "*Me, me!* I ham. I honly have these fi-f-i-t-s." "Well, if you leave off *liquor* you won't have them." "Why, I honly dranked one glass to-day." It was evident from his breath, that he had the "creature" in him. "Won't you give me some medicine?" "No; not a grain, unless you will leave off liquor." "I only takes it 'cause I's sick." "No; leave it off; it only *makes* you sick." "Well, jist so my wife says."

But excessive drinking is such a frequent cause of epilepsy, that it seems quite superfluous to dwell upon it. Every one knows it, and the way to health for all such is plain, *let liquor alone*. No doctor will then be needed.

The *third* exciting cause of epilepsy, in my order, as proposed, is *self-abuse*.

This, unquestionably, is the *giant* source of the evil. No physician who has not been familiar with a lunatic asylum, or had charge of an idiotic establishment, or been engaged in the special practice of seeing and prescribing for this class of patients, will be likely to form any idea of the vast number of patients, the victims of epilepsy from this single vice alone. It extends from early childhood to middle, and even to old age, where any of its victims (as few do) hold on to life so long. There is no one cause, too, which the patients themselves; and their friends for them, will so promptly deny, and so persistently persevere in the denial of, as in this vice.

It may be thought, is thought, and often said, that this is a subject that ought never to be named. Perhaps it should not, but it is one of those items which an apostle names, "abusers of themselves;" and the *delicate* ears may settle it with the Bible the best way they can. Enough has been said on this subject in the preceding chapters.

I assure you I will not go beyond facts;

facts, too, which have come under my own observation; and these, without any exaggeration, are enough "to make the ears of all who hear," and know them, "to tingle." These cases, so gloomy in their results, though numerous among the poor and otherwise degraded, are by no means confined to that class. They are often found among the educated and wealthy, yea, even in professedly Christian families.

One aggravation of this difficulty is found in the fact, that *gluttony* and *self-abuse* often meet in the same patient. This was the case with the one to whom reference was had above. I there stated how persistent he was in devising means to indulge his appetite. Not half of them, however, were then stated. If sent out with a quarter of a dollar, (as was once done,) to buy a three-cent postage-stamp, he would spend the residue in gingerbread, figs, nuts, and candy, and then say he laid it out for some necessary article. He had been furnished with *tickets* by his friends that he might ride in the horse-cars, and not have the money to buy them with. These he would sell at a reduced price, and then buy some vile trash to eat, with the money.

He had lost all self-control over his gluttonous appetite.

He was just as helpless as it respected the control of his mind. After the most solemn promises that he would never put himself in the way of what evidently caused his vice, in ten minutes he would go right into the fire again, as though the hand of necessity were upon him.

In such cases, I have been reminded of, and often read over, (and sometimes to the patient,) the following remarks of Dr. John Mason Good, in his "Study of Medicine:" "*The salacity of a debauched life, or lechery confirmed by habit, can only be cured by a total change of habit, which is a discipline that the established debauchee has rarely the courage to attempt. Exercise, change of place and pursuits, cooling laxatives, and a less stimulant diet than he will commonly be found accustomed to, may assist him in the attempt; but in general, the mind is as corrupt as the body, and the case is hopeless. He perseveres, however, at his peril; for, with increasing weakness, he will at length sink into all the miserable train of symptoms, characterizing that species of maras-*

mus which is usually called *tabes dorsalis*—consumption from debility.

The habit treated of in the first part of this book, was the subject of one paper, the latter part of which, only, is here inserted.

Now, that this is the immediate exciting cause in all these cases, is not at all probable; but it may account for many of them. The cases of this character (attacks thus induced by a long continuance of this practice) have been with me the most difficult to cure. As a general thing, where young girls have epilepsy, or *epileptiform* attacks from some abnormal female condition, I have succeeded in removing them without much difficulty. But in cases like those here named, a long course of treatment has generally been necessary; and then it has not always proved successful. I suppose the following may be among the reasons: *Some will continue the vicious practice that induced the attacks, and such cases are hopeless.* In others, the convulsions seem to continue, from the mere force of habit, after the exciting cause has ceased.

“Nature advances, never leaps.”

In epileptic patients from this vice, when they are taken early and properly treated, and the evil habit which has been the immediately exciting cause of them abandoned, recovery will be pretty certain. But when the practice has continued long, the convulsions been frequent, the whole nervous system become shattered, and the mind essentially impaired, a favorable *prognosis* can rarely be given; the case is hopeless. Still, I have seen a few cases where the recuperative powers of the system have exceeded my expectations, and perfect recovery has resulted, when I scarcely dared predict such a favorable termination. So that if the patient, male or female, will abandon at once and forever the practice, and come within reasonable bounds of *regimen* and *medicine*, a trial ought to be made.

After all, these cases will ever prove, in my judgment, hard to remedy; and yet I have seen too many such recoveries to despair.

I believe more nervous irritation and debility; more epileptic convulsions, nervous spasms; more idiocy and insanity, especially among the young, arise from *this one source*,

than from all others combined. The *reports* from the physicians and superintendents of our almshouses, asylums for the insane, and idiotic schools, especially in New England, I think, confirm this opinion.

What a field, then, here opens for moralizing! When will the physician find another that equals it? What is his duty in the premises? These are important questions for him to solve.

The writer does not hesitate to say, from a not very short life or experience, that the *medical profession, as a class*, have done more to promote the health, happiness, longevity, and temporal welfare of the community, *gratis*, than any other class. Their labors are generally but poorly compensated. Still, the physician—the good, “the beloved physician”—labors on, and is found in the front rank in all sanitary measures, educational movements, and benevolent and philanthropic undertakings.

After saying this much in favor of the profession, I am constrained to add, I think generally they have not sufficiently inquired after the one vice now under consideration. The physician should be a gentlemen above

suspicion—never capable of rudeness or indelicacy—assuredly avoiding anything that would lead to an impure thought. If, as the “family adviser,” in their private and delicate relations, he mentions matters of this kind to others, he is not merely unfit for the station he holds, but deserves to be expelled from the *faculty*, and excluded from good society. Can he be faithful to his patient, and yet preserve silence upon the subject of this paper, when he believes, or has reason to suspect, even, that such a habit lies at the foundation of the malady he is called to relieve? The inquiry, of course, should be made with great tenderness; and the patient and friends should understand, that it is made for no other purpose than to be the better able to point out the only course that can result in restored health. When the inquiry is *thus* made, I believe the patients, and friends of the patients, would be rare who would object. But suppose they should become angry, and say, “such an inquiry is a vile insinuation against the honor, integrity, morality, and standing of the family.” Still, I think, duty impels him to make the inquiry; and a consciousness of having done

his duty, would more than compensate the loss of any such family.

The next *exciting* cause of epilepsy, named in order in my first letter on the various, direct, or exciting causes of the attacks, is *excessive pleasure*.

This deserves a separate notice, though, in some respects, nearly allied to the preceding. Many persons, who have never been addicted to the habit referred to above, have lost their health by excessive indulgence in venereal pleasure; and though, according to my experience, epilepsy does not so frequently supervene upon this excess as *general debility, dyspepsia, neuralgia, nervous headache, etc.*, yet there are many made epileptics by this practice. More *males* than females, however, are found in this class. Whatever may be the physiological cause or reason of this, I am satisfied such is the fact. Medical writers have generally admitted that *men* who are excessive in pleasure, "break down" sooner than women, by an equal amount of indulgence.

Probably most of the older class of physicians, can call to mind one or more cases, in which they have been consulted relative to

epileptic attacks, that have supervened upon immoderate indulgence in this pleasure; and could all these cases be brought together and published, they would make a volume of such vast dimensions as to astonish the world.

Dr. John Armstrong, an independent thinker, but a better medical practitioner than poet, says: "Excess of venery is very often the occasion of epilepsy, of which I have seen some most lamentable examples."

Dr. Eberle says: "Excessive evacuations are among the exciting causes of epilepsy, and this is particularly the case with inordinate seminal evacuations, either from excessive venery or masturbation."

I have now said enough to show the injurious consequences following *excessive pleasure*. I have confined this injury to one disease, or to what is denominated epilepsy; and I have no wish or intention of extending my remarks to the other diseases induced by these indulgences, though all nervous diseases run in the same channel. My object has been simply to state my own experience in a class of diseases, to which attention has been specially directed for many years.

The next item, according to my *programme*, to be noticed as a cause of epilepsy, or nervous disease, is *precocity of intellect and overtaking children in study*. This is a subject upon which physicians and medical writers have generally discharged their duty faithfully, and still there is great fault somewhere; and hundreds of slender, delicate, and precocious children, especially in our large cities, are annually sent to a premature grave. One would suppose enough had been said and written upon this subject by physicians, and in the popular journals, against the *hot-house* system, and unnecessary *brain-pressure* upon such children, to put a stop to such a pernicious practice; and yet the evil is as prevalent as at any former period.

Perhaps this evil has received impetus, and may be accounted for in some degree, from the fact, that there are children upon whose minds no impression can be made. They will not apply themselves; and in this day, when children generally rule at home, and do as they please at school, such *wooden-heads demand* compulsion. Their minds, being as obtuse as to any sense of the necessity of application to study, as the skin of

the rhinoceros is to blows, can never be overtasked. Such can never be injured by study. But this is not the class of children out of which epileptics, and others nervously diseased, are *manufactured* by intense mental application.

They are entirely of a different class. Generally, they are of a serofulous *diathesis*, and serofulous children are almost invariably precocious. The nervous system of such children is extremely delicate. Their whole frame is slender and sensitive. They have a quickness and vivacity not common to other children. They act, move, talk, and play with all their might. They are never still, and always very inquisitive. They will learn, place them where you will. They should never be allowed to study early. They had better, like the Emilius of Rousseau, never be allowed to learn to read till they are a dozen years old.

Urge one of these children prematurely forward, and his mind soon becomes jaded; his intellect becomes unbalanced; nervous disease supervenes, and the little bright and sprightly child, the idol of its fond parents, their "little pride," soon becomes the object

of their solicitude and painful anxiety. With the pressing studies, the nervous irritation increased, and bodily health began to fail. The bright flashes of thought, the sparkling witticisms of the pale little thing, bursting from the overtasked mind, called forth loud applause from inconsiderate friends and ignorant admirers.

Next followed nervous *spasms*, and, as the nervous system continued to give way, *more food* was claimed for the bodily exhaustion, and the *more* food was taken, the worse for the child. The twitchings and spasms increased, till, by some extra mental effort, or sudden fright, or overloaded stomach, the spasm became the convulsion, and *epilepsy*, with all its horrors, was apparent; and, under the ordinary treatment, in all probability, an early grave or irretrievable *idiocy* awaits the child.

Such has been, and now is, the course pursued by many parents, and such a physiological and hygienic perversion of nature, and of all her laws of action, can never fail to be visited by the sad retribution of an exhausted system of both body and mind.

Both as a medical practitioner, and as

having come much in contact with children—for the writer was for several years a member of the Board of Public Schools in Boston, and is now one of the directors of the Public Schools of Philadelphia—he is prepared to verify what he says upon the subject of mental pressure upon precocious children. Indeed, so intense has been his feeling upon this subject, that he has instituted a school upon the following plan, for little children: It is not a school for *study*, but for the *physical culture* of little children. If one-half the *study* now demanded in our public schools, of young children, were relinquished, and the children compelled to practice some athletic exercise instead, they would be great gainers, both as respects mind and body.

The object of the writer's school for these young children, is to amuse, entertain, and instruct them. Amusement by plays and innocent games, constructing block-houses, teaching the alphabet, and other items by cards, explaining pictures from scriptural and other historical characters and events, drawing outline maps, or imitating outline pictures of animals, birds, and houses upon

paper, or making them in the form of basket-work with strips of pasteboard variously colored, playing ball, battle-door, calisthenic exercises, and such like entertainments, constitute the employment of the school.

This school has been under the immediate care of a *lady* of amiable disposition, cultivated mind, and good taste. The parents who have patronized it have been delighted, as they have seen their children in good health, their bodily organs well developed, their faces ruddy and smiling, their eyes bright, their minds better informed than those who have been made to sit still and study six hours a day, and their social affections lovely and kind.

Let parents be warned against the modern *hot-bed* course of education pursued in many schools. Teacher or parent, be warned against wishing to see your pupil or son a *genius*. You will be quite as likely in the end to see him an *idiot*, or to follow him to a premature grave. All precocious children need *holding back*, rather than *spurring on*. An early development of the mental powers is wholly unnecessary, even if children are designed for scholars. Almost all our scholars

graduate from college *too early*. Their bodies are injured by too much study *in early life*, and their education is comparatively worthless to what it would be, if they graduated several years later.

Our educational system has been in a wrong direction. It begins, is carried on, and ends wrong. It is opposed to physiological laws. They demand the education of the *physical* powers first. This commences with the mental. This unnatural process lays the foundation for many cases of epilepsy. Nor is epilepsy the only disease that is caused by such a process. Chorea, neuralgia, and general debility of the whole nervous system, follow in the train of diseases which are thus induced.

The grand defect of our system of education is, in over-stimulating, or over-straining the mind to the injury of the body. I would have not only the first seven, but the first ten years of the child devoted chiefly to cultivating and strengthening the organs of the body. This is but the prompting of nature. It is the principle upon which all builders act. They lay the foundation first. "The house we live in" is the body.

This premature development of the mind, and neglect of the body, have long been prominent evils in our educational system. Some years ago, "Infant schools" were in vogue. Little children were taught reading, arithmetic, grammar, Latin and Greek; and we were soon to have learned men and women, almost from the cradle. Many looked on, and wondered "whereunto this thing would grow," and what kind of men and women these precocious children would make. But they were soon relieved of this anxiety: for it was found that *such* children rarely lived to become men or women; or, if they did, they dwindled down into mere commonplace persons, mere intellectual pigmies, verifying the old adage, "soon ripe, soon rotten." If the body did not die, it was so enfeebled as to be useless, or worse, and the mind deranged or idiotic.

It is often very pleasing to the fond parents to see how bright, intelligent and witty their child is; and, not unfrequently, they find great satisfaction in showing to others the brilliancy and mental sprightliness of their precocious darling. Such parents know not what they are doing. All the praise

lavished by such parental folly, and fond aunts, doting grand-parents, and injudicious friends, tends to the serious injury and almost certain destruction of these children.

Their keen flashes and sparkling wittieisms are but the precursors of an over-stretched mind and a neglected body. Every parent who *thus* rears his child, instead of preparing him to be the comfort and solace of his declining years, is fitting him to bring down his gray "hairs with sorrow to the grave."

I knew a child, naturally frail, the eldest son of a New England clergyman, bright and intelligent, the idol of his fond parents and doting friends, whose mind was altogether too active for the body; or, in the beautiful language put into the mouth of the "old Dutchman," in the "Temperance Tales," when the "sword was too sharp for de scabbard." At the age of seven years he could read Latin, Greek, and the Hebrew alphabet.

At the age of eight years, nervous spasms commenced, and constantly increased, till, as the body became weaker, more food being taken than could be properly digested, at ten he died of epilepsy. This is but the history of multitudes.

They are indulged, neglected in physical, and stimulated in mental education, till the nervous system breaks down, and an early grave, or a diseased body, and an idiotic mind become the final result. Many are thus destroyed every year by our system of education, which all begins at the wrong end. Then use this course, and train the body first, and there will be but little danger of too much study.

This neglect of the physical and stimulating of the mental man, is the more to be deplored, from the fact, that this early *precocity* is wholly unnecessary; because, many of the best educated and useful men the world has ever seen, were very *dull* pupils in their childhood. Andrew Fuller, Sir Walter Scott, and Daniel Webster, were all very dull scholars in their childhood; and yet, who has ever done more in theological discussion than the former?—or who, in the whole world of fiction, than the second?—or who, at the bar and in the Senate, than the latter—well called the “Defender of the Constitution?” Many such men there have been. They have lived and wrote, and labored, and blessed the world, after *hot-house*

plants, of precocious intellects, have long been dead and forgotten! What a lesson to all parents and teachers, who wish to raise up a generation of intellectual *giants* and corporeal *dwarfs*!

We have seen "the only son of his mother, and she a widow," toil on with decreasing health and increasing mind, through the Academy, College, and Seminary, and sink into an untimely grave, just as he was prepared to enter upon the duties of a learned profession. Affection had labored, a fond mother and doting sisters had spent days of toil and nights of care, to aid him in his noble cause; but all in vain. He died, at the hour of victory, a martyr to *bodily neglect* and *mental pressure*. He dug his own grave, inadvertently, thoughtlessly, unintentionally, but *really*. A little good instruction *heeded*, would have saved him to comfort and solace friends, and bless the world. Who has not lamented the premature death of Henry Kirk White. Byron has the following touching lines upon the death of this young genius:

"Oh! What a noble heart was here undone!

When science self-destroyed her favorite son!

Yes, she too much indulged the fond pursuit ;
She sowed the seeds, but death has reaped the fruit.
'Twas thine own genius gave the fatal blow,
And helped to plant the wound that laid thee low."

Let all the friends of education, parents, teachers, physicians, clergymen, Boards of Education, guard this whirlpool in which so many bright geniuses have been engulfed. Better be in early childhood, yes, during the first ten years of life, intellectual *blockheads*, than hastened to such premature deaths.

When a practitioner in Boston, often was I called to children prostrated by this *brain-pressure*. Well do I remember a little girl, out of the many, bright, quick, ambitious, always at the head of the class, the admiration and pride of her parents and teacher, but brought to an early grave by the well-intended, but ill-judged training of that teacher. Little did she think she was laying the foundation, while stimulating her young mind, for such a death. That disease was not epilepsy. But it was what the common people call *brain fever*. It was mental pressure.

Now, this is a subject which every physician does, or ought to understand, and to

impress decply upon the family when called to see such a child. But the evil is, the physieian usually is not ealled till the mischief is done, and hence his adviee amounts to as much as it does "to lock the door after the horse is stolen."

The elergyman, the teacher, every parent, and, above all, every physician, ought to cry out against that educational process which kills hundreds and thousands of children annually in our land. I raise "The Beacon" upon this work.

My next item, as a cause of epilepsy, is *willfulness*. It may seem singular to some, to find this enumerated as a cause of so severe a malady. But who does not know, physician or not, that willfulness has caused, *morally*, often something more to be deplored than epilepsy. It has separated husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, and deluged the world with anguish. It is, in no small degree, the cause of our present evil war. What is the will? What is willfulness?

Will is a faculty of the mind by which we do, or do not do, an action. Willfulness is obstinacy, stubbornness, and perverseness. Though man be compounded of reason,

judgment, and will, yet it often happens, that the latter either swallows up, masters, or controls both the former.

It is a very true saying, that "life and death are in the power of the passions." This was an early discovery. *Hippocrates* wrote of it, and Galen, at the age of twenty-eight, when he formed rules of living for himself, which he strictly adhered to during a very long life, incorporated this, as one of the most prominent among them, to wit, that "he would never allow himself to become angry, or in the least discomposed; nor raise his hand in a passion against even a slave:" and he adds, "I beseech all persons not to degrade themselves to the level of the brutes, by being led away by their passions." Happy would it have been, and to the credit of the medical profession, had all its members been guided by the rule prescribed for himself by Galen; especially, may this be said, when we call to mind the fact that no less a man than *John Hunter*, died in a fit of passion, in St. George's Hospital, because the "Board of Managers" refused to comply with, or rather, rejected his plans.

It has been my fortune to see a number

of epileptics, in whom the malady was induced and perpetuated by willfulness. In my first letter, published in the REPORTER of April 26, 1862, on the "*Treatment of Epilepsy*," under the head, "*Govern the Mind*," I related a case, where no convulsions had occurred for three months—a long period in such a case, where they had taken place previously once a week—and where, it was hoped, they would never again appear; yet in which they were again induced by a fit of passion. Indeed, such cases are very readily accounted for upon the physiological laws of our being. The delicate connection of the nervous system with that of the circulatory and respiratory, indeed, with the whole animal economy, and the inexplicable, but certain influence which the body has over the mind, and the mind over the body, would naturally lead us to expect such results from ungoverned passion.

I have now under treatment, a patient who freely admits that fits of passion for a long time preceded fits of epilepsy. In this case, it is true, some of the other causes, already named, combined to bring about this deplorable result. This patient was "a spoiled

child," who never knew what it was to be subject to parental or any other authority. Early accustomed to extreme nervous irritability, and always indulged in it, and succumbed to by parents,

"The young disease, which must subdue at length,
Grew with his growth, and strengthened with his strength."

The study of the nerves—nervous energy, or of the *nervous system*, is that of the highest department of animal physiology. Let any man, physician or not, examine their structure carefully, look into the functions of the nerves, and see what a governing power they possess over the whole body; how they control the movements of the muscles and the circulation of the blood; how necessary their influence to respiration and digestion, and how the mind derives sensation and perception, and holds communion with the external world through them, and he will not doubt the vast power which they exercise over all the other organs of the body, and the controlling effect they have upon all the emotions and passions of the mind.

It is through the nerves, (as every physiologist knows,) acting upon the muscles of

the face, that the emotions and feelings of the heart and the thoughts of the mind are depicted on, and read in, the countenance.

“There’s a language that’s *mute*, there’s a silence that
speaks ;

There is something that cannot be *told* ;

There are words that can only be read on the *cheeks*,
And *thoughts* but the *eye* can unfold.”

No words are necessary to express emotions and passions. They are expressed by the muscles of the face moved by the nerves. Shakspeare says :

“I do believe thee ; I saw his *heart*
In his face.”

Sir Charles Bell says : “The man was wrong who found fault with nature for not placing a window before the heart, in order to render visible human thoughts and intentions. There is, in truth, provision made in the countenance and outward bearing for such discoveries.”

The pathology and treatment of “nervous diseases,” afford the most interesting field for the study of nature. As already said, it involves the highest branch of physiology, of both body and mind. Nor is

there a man living, of ordinary powers, who has not read, about as plainly as words could state, the passions on the face.

Clarence, not alone, might say to his murderer—

“ How *deadly* dost thou speak !
Your *eyes* do menace me : why look you pale !”

Look at *anger* unrestrained :—for the time being, the man is a brute. How he trembles ! How his features change ! How pale he is !—the next moment how red !—the next, how black, livid ! See his teeth, how set ! His eye-balls, how red ! How they roll ! How horribly he talks !

Tasso has well described this passion in the rage of Argantes—

“ The pagan lord, to such affronts unused,
 Bit both his lips, mouth's strangled orators ;
He would have spoke, but only sounds confused
 Broke forth, such sounds as when a lion roars ;
Or, as when lightning clears the stormy doors
 Of heaven, to rouse from its reluctant rest
The thunder growling as the tempest pours ;
 For every word, which he with pain expressed,
Escaped in tones as gruff from his infuriate breast.”

It is well known that epileptic convulsions distort and render peculiarly ugly the

countenance of the patient. This has been generally supposed to be attributable to the contortion of the muscles so frequently by the convulsions. There is, doubtless, some foundation for this opinion. But, from considerable experience in such cases, I feel prepared to say that, in many of them, the distortion and peculiarly ugly and hateful appearance of the face, is quite as attributable to ungoverned passion, as to the convulsions. There is a reciprocal action, something like what we used to call in certain games, an old-fashioned *whip-row*, passion operating to cause the convulsions, and the convulsions combining with it to distort the countenance. I do not wonder that the Romans considered epilepsy as exhibiting the peculiar hatred of the gods. No marvel, that they considered an attack of the disease an ill-omen; and when it occurred in the forum, suspended all business for the day. Their name was very expressive, *morbus comitialis*.

If children were properly trained, and early taught to govern their tempers, there would be a vast diminution of nervous diseases.

Within a week, a young man, an epilep-

tic, was brought to my institution for treatment, whose *temper* caused the disease. When will such cases cease? In reasoning with him on the subject, he seemed wholly ignorant of their cause. He said he could keep his temper, but I soon had evidence that he was mistaken. In no case where epilepsy has been induced in this way, will it cease, but by removing the cause. When I come to speak of the treatment of this malady in another work, more may be said about governing the passions.

In the six causes of epilepsy, and other nervous diseases already enumerated, namely, *gluttony, drunkenness, self-abuse, excessive pleasure, precocity and overtaking the brain, and willfulness*, I have given such as the patients themselves can control. These are *self-induced* causes; consequently, the patients are without excuse.

There are other causes over which they have not a similar jurisdiction. The one now to be considered is *Vermes*, or *worms*.

There are animals in the human body. These are, generally, in the form of worms; and, of these, there are various kinds. Those

inhabiting the interior cavities and passages, are called *entozoa*; while those that live on the outside are denominated *ectozoa*. We have reason to believe that there are as many species of parasitic animals, as there are animals themselves. In the human family, there are many varieties, while several infest the large mammalia. Some of them are found in the mucous passages; some in the brain, in muscles, especially in all the voluntary muscles. Some of them produce *ova*, or *eggs*, so small as to circulate in the blood; those that are the most common and best known, inhabit the alimentary canal.

Of these, the *Ascaris Lumbricoides*, the common, long, round worm may be named first. They are characterized by a small head, with a triangular mouth, around which are three oblong tubercles or prominences. They feed on chyle, and sometimes grow to a foot in length. They reproduce their kind like most land-animals. They do not necessarily cause sickness, and seldom cause convulsions; and still more seldom do they cause epilepsy. Still, I have seen cases where they have produced convulsions of an *epileptiform* character.

The presence of these worms is indicated by startings in sleep, itching of the nose, disgust of food, irregular appetite, diarrhoea, foul breath, irregular exacerbation of fever, emaciation, and sometimes, especially in children, convulsions; the belly is tumefied, and the eyes sunken. They maintain their position by a constant effort on their part. Still, they are sometimes passed by the anus, and have been known to crawl out of the mouth.

Next, I may name the *oxyuris vermicularis*, *ascaralles*, *maw*, or *pin worm*. This worm is seldom more than half an inch in length. Its tail ends in a fine point. It produces its ova from small orifices on the neck. It is a terrible scourge to children. It is always most troublesome at night. Usually, they are confined to the rectum; but sometimes they are higher up in the bowels; and I have seen them in bunches like clusters of grapes in a *subject* around the liver, and in the cœcum. Their *periodicity*, their quiescence during the day, and their active lives, are very peculiar. It is probable that each colony that appears, is the offspring of the preceding. Though they are very small,

and apparently "a feeble folk," yet they often greatly disturb the nervous system. They much more frequently cause *epileptiform* convulsions, than the class of vermes first named. I have had several patients in whom no other cause for the convulsions could be found; and where there was pretty good evidence that *they* did cause them, from the fact that, when they were destroyed, the convulsions disappeared.

Then, there is the *Tricocephalus*. This is small at one end, and not large at the other. The head is at the smaller end. The body is long, say two inches. This worm is rarely seen in this country; but is very common in Europe. It usually inhabits the cœcum.

Then, there is the *Strongylus Gigas*. This has a large head, with six tubercles, a small tail, and is shaped like a funnel. Its color is red. Its residence is in the kidney. Its presence is very difficult to *diagnosicate*, unless one or more have been expelled. They are sometimes passed by the urethra in large numbers. They often cause serious trouble.

Then, there is the *Filaria*, or *Guinea-worm*—very long, very slender, peculiar to

a warm climate, and found chiefly in the flesh of the negro. When about to appear, a little pimple is first seen, which goes on till it bursts, when the animal appears. If seized, and an attempt is made to draw him out, he is broken, and considerable inflammation follows.

Then, there is the *Trichina*, which dwells in the voluntary muscles. This animal lies coiled up in a bag about the size of the nit of the louse. A small piece of muscle has been known to contain hundreds of them. They are not found in the muscles of organic life. Not much is known of their symptoms. They are not often found in this country.

All these vermes have a *cylindrical* form.

Then, there are worms less perfectly organized. Among these we find the *Tænia*, or *Tape-worm*. Of these, there are two species; first, the *Tænia Solium*. We know him by the joints expelled; and, what is very peculiar, the joints are broader than they are long; but may be pulled out to a greater length than breadth. The head of this worm is so very small, that it requires microscopic examination. It has four fenestra

with a mouth, surrounded by circular rays; and two lateral passages extend from the head through the whole body. This worm is found, not in the human species only, but also in other animals.

Then, we have the *Tenia-lata*, or *broad tape-worm*. It has a very small head, and we cannot be certain of the final relief of the patient, till *this* is expelled. This species has a long, slender neck, terminated in a broad body, jointed with tubes in the *middle*; while in the *Tenia Solium*, these tubes are found in the *edges* of the tape. This species of the tape-worm is found in cold countries only. It does not cast off joints like the other. Constant vomiting is a prominent symptom where this species of worm is present; while, in the other species, the symptoms are sense of weight, irritation of the rectum, and, by sympathy with the nervous centres, convulsions. Then, we find the *cysticercus*, with a crown surrounded with rays, and the *excoelæurus*. These two seem to be but imperfect forms of the tape-worm. It is said to take three generations to form the tape-worm.

Then, there is the *Hydatid*, a bladder

without a head. The cist is an independent organism. These *hydatids* are found in all parts of the body. Not much is known of their life or treatment.

“Thus worms suit all conditions;
Misers are muck-worms,
Silk-worms, beaux,
And Death-watches, physicians.”

This is a melancholy reflection upon our poor bodies, and should be laid to heart by all, especially by the timorously nice creature who shrinks away in disdain from the pertinacious beggar, in whose dirty clothes and matted hair, nestle herds of “small deer,” forgetful that she may carry in her own person equally numerous herds; the only difference being, that *his* are *ectozoa*, while *hers* are *entozoa*. It should be added, however, that not one case in twenty, where worms are supposed to exist, turns out to *be* worms. It has not come within my present plan, to give any *treatment* for vermes.

I may add, in conclusion, that any class of these vermes may produce convulsions; and, when we consider the intimate connection of the periphery, or ramifications of the

nerves, and how often the mere wounding of these produces *tetanus*, or *lock-jaw*, we should not be surprised (where worms exist) to find convulsions of an epileptiform kind, especially in children. The two classes of worms which, from a long experience, I have found to cause these convulsions the most frequently, are the *pin* and the *tape-worm*.

This subject of worms has been brought in here, because there are so many nervous affections which they cause; not because persons can guard against them, as they can against the evil habits spoken of in this book. Still, there is much that they can do by keeping the *skin healthy*, and living temperately. Persons have been known to suffer for years with convulsions, which were cured by simple lime-water.

The following named books are for sale at the publication office of the BEACON, and will be sent by mail, post paid, for the prices named.

HOW TO ENJOY LIFE;
OR,
PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HYGIENE.
BY WILLIAM M. CORNELL, M.D., LL.D.

Price, \$1 25.

This work explains the reciprocal action of the body and mind, and shows how much human *happiness* depends upon their nice adjustment and the knowledge of their agency. The author is well known as a lecturer on Physiology and Hygiene, and the Treatment of Nervous Diseases, and having devoted years of study to this department, has presented a popular treatise of great value to every student, professional man, and, in fact, every family.—*Press*.

DR. WM. M. CORNELL'S
WORK ON
EPILEPSY AND NERVOUS DISEASES.
Price, 50 cents.

CLERICAL HEALTH.
BY DR. WM. M. CORNELL, M.D., LL.D.
Price, 50 cents.

